

RAGE POLITICS ■ RELIGIOUS RIGHT MOVES LEFT ■ LIBERAL TARIANS?

JANUARY 29, 2007

The American Conservative

ALL IN!

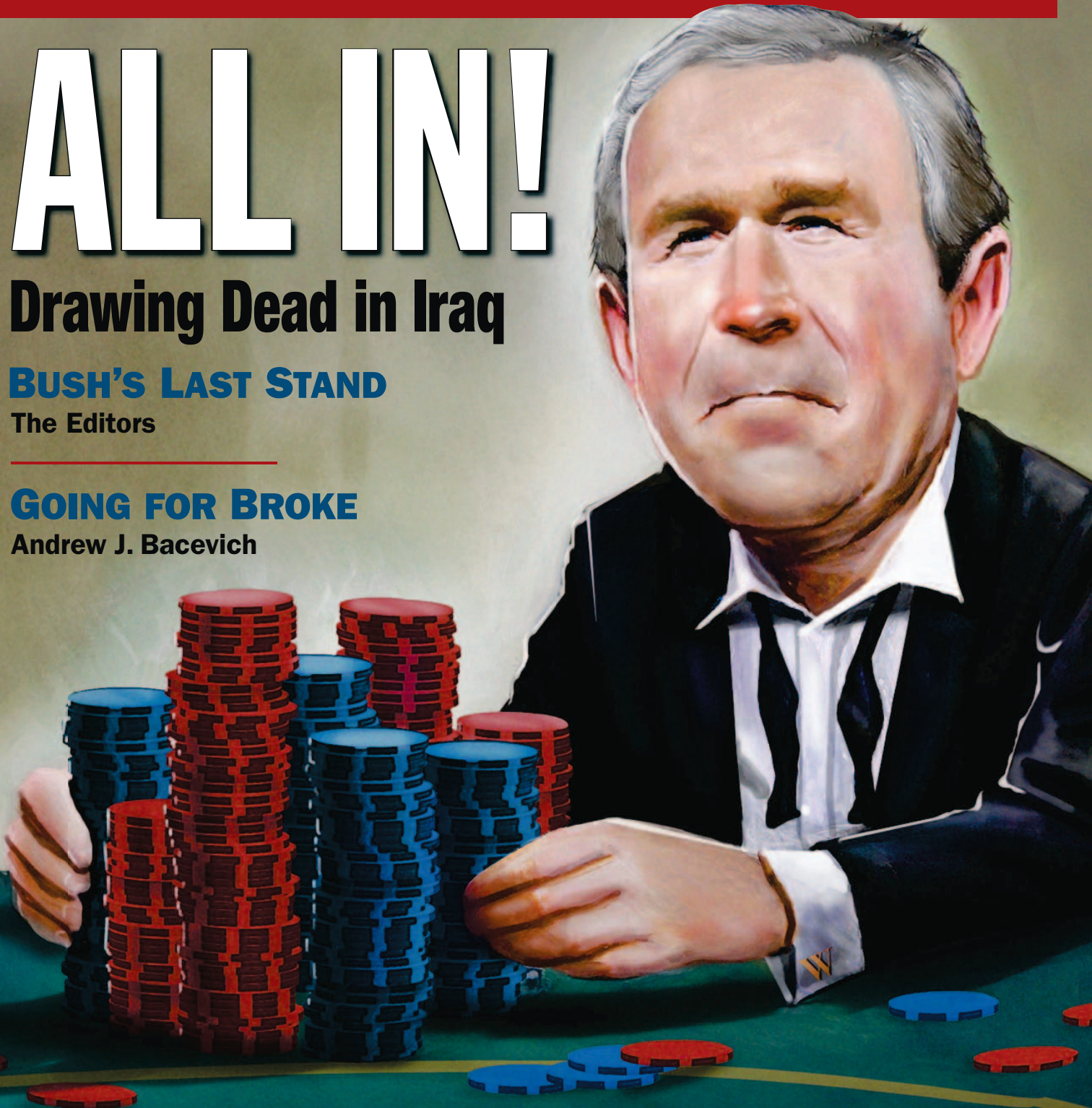
Drawing Dead in Iraq

BUSH'S LAST STAND

The Editors

GOING FOR BROKE

Andrew J. Bacevich



MR. LIBERAL

In his Dec. 4 review of *A Glorious Disaster: Barry Goldwater's Presidential Campaign and the Origins of the Conservative Movement*, Gregory Schneider was too kind to Goldwater, whose latter-day liberalism was assuredly not a concoction of Carville and company.

Consider the following: Goldwater endorsed Gerald Ford over Ronald Reagan in 1976; appeared on national TV with Jane Fonda and Norman Lear to hype People for the American Way; supported Sharon Percy Rockefeller for the board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in preference to a conservative being considered; raised money for the radicalized Lowell Weicker to run for governor of Connecticut against a Republican; endorsed a liberal Democrat over a conservative Arizona Republican for Congress in 1992; and opted for Bill Clinton over Bob Dole in 1996. In 1964, Goldwater said that the church-state divide was "so high and rigid as to threaten the spiritual foundations of the American nation," a view entirely out of character for him 20 years later.

It is long past time for conservatives to stop deceiving themselves about their onetime but eventually perfidious hero.

JOHN D. KING
Austin, Texas

OPEN GATES & WAIT 30 YEARS

Steve Sailer is always informative, but his article on immigrants (Jan. 15) neglects a key point—their children. The first generation's diversity may fragment America, but it is not the first generation that matters much. They do the dirty work, live in crowded semi-slums, and just work. Most are poor, insecure, living with their customs, fearful of strangers and new ways, and unable to speak English well enough to get good jobs.

It is their children and their children's children who have made and benefited

America so much for hundreds of years. It is the children who gain education, start businesses, make inventions, create enormous wealth for America, give us much of our technological lead in the world, join our military, and are the key for our nation's dynamism. Few Americans study the hard sciences; over half of Ph.D.'s in science are earned by the foreign-born; Google itself is half immigrant-made. America needs immigrants' labor and will benefit from their ambitious children.

Although there may seem to be an excess of Mexican peasants at the moment, a solution could be a nine-month work visa that would greatly benefit both America and Mexico.

JON BASIL UTLEY
Washington, D.C.

WHAT AMNESTY BACKLASH?

Rep. Tom Tancredo makes a number of excellent points in his article "No Mandate for Amnesty" (Dec. 18). The best is the question he poses about the election loss of Republican Senators Chafee, Burns, and DeWine. The chattering classes have been endlessly pointing out the election losses of Republican Senators Santorum, Talent, and Allen, all of whom voted against the Senate amnesty bill. But the losses of the three Republicans who voted for the Senate amnesty are conveniently swept under the rug.

I would like to ask an inconvenient question, though. What are we to make of the three Democratic senators who voted against the Senate amnesty? Senators Byrd, Nelson, and Stabenow were all re-elected rather easily. Our elite classes will, no doubt, point out that we should not read too much into this because it was a Democratic year. After all, Senators Byrd and Nelson represent red-state West Virginia and Nebraska, respectively. True enough. But Senator Stabenow's vote against abolishing the

American people was cast from blue-state Michigan. If her vote did not hurt her re-election chances there, who can say it would hurt members of Congress from other blue states?

It's the Republican senators from red states—McCain of Arizona, Graham of South Carolina, Brownback of Kansas—that are the real problem.

BILL MATWIJW
Chicago, Ill.

NOBLE CALLING

My deep thanks to Claes Ryn for his article entitled "Not By Politics Alone" (Jan. 15). As a conservative teaching in a liberalized public high school in Connecticut, I frequently wonder if I am in the right profession. I have, as of late, entertained the idea that I might be more effective for the cause of traditional American values and ideas in the area of politics, believing that one sign of my pen might have a greater influence on society than my lesson plans.

Professor Ryn's article has reassured me that this is not the case. As an educator, I have certain powers that politicians do not. Though I had always believed this, I began to doubt it, largely because any influence I may have on my students is not easily quantified or immediately observed. Ryn's piece has given me hope. I have printed the following words from his article and have them posted in my classroom: "Enormous power lies with those who shape the mind and the imagination and make others see life through their eyes."

JASON CROTEAU
Canterbury, Conn.

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stand by for a Surge...

[BELTWAY]

DANCE WITH THE ONE WHO BRUNG YOU

As Democrats glory in their new majority, they would do well to realize that they don't now control Congress because voters wanted a minimum-wage hike. Most people probably didn't read Nancy Pelosi's 31-page glossy "A New Direction for America" and flock to the polls to secure its promised "Competitive Small Business Environment for Innovation."

They are weary of Mr. Bush's war. That's not the same as trusting Democrats, for whom "voting for before voting against" is the height of dissent. Sixty-nine percent of registered voters surveyed by ABC News said they don't think the Congressional Democrats "have a clear plan for handling the situation in Iraq." But in a credit to American optimism, voters wagered that partisanship might stand in for principled opposition. CBS polling found that 72 percent believe Democrats will decrease current troop levels in Iraq or seek to withdraw from the country entirely.

They'll likely be disappointed. When ABC's Charlie Gibson asked freshman House Democrat Nancy Boyda, "If [President Bush] says we need more troops, is the Democratic majority going to be compliant?" she replied, "I think we're going to vote to support what the commander in chief and head of the military asks us to do. At least, I'm certainly going to vote to support it." Perhaps she'll polish his boots as well.

That's why the White House can widen its war without risk of the other side finding a spine. Democrats are busy indulging in the delusion that they were elected to deliver the standard liberal wish list. But those who gave them the gavel have a more pressing concern than student loan rates, and they won't take well to being ignored.

[MEMORIAM]

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The low-key and dignified ceremonies that surrounded Gerald Ford's passing were a reminder of how fortunate the country was to have him in the White House as Richard Nixon's successor. The quip uttered during one of his first addresses to the nation after Nixon's resignation—that he was "a Ford, not a Lincoln"—perfectly struck the tone the country needed: lawful, sensible stewardship of the executive branch following eight years of turmoil.

For baby boomers who had become "alienated," as one of the 1960s catchphrases had it, Gerald Ford was the first president they did not despise; his great political accomplishment was to effectively usher in a post-radical era. His pardon of Nixon was the correct way to move Americans beyond the purported crimes of his predecessor.

Saigon finally fell to the North Vietnamese on his watch, and while he wished to do more than he could to reinforce the failing government, once it was gone, Ford was masterful in conveying to Americans that they had more important things to do than wallow in defeat and bickering over who "lost" Vietnam. Many in his party would not have been so wise.

Ford's posthumously aired criticism of George W. Bush's Iraq War made us nostalgic for his political style: homespun and cautious, a Main Street kind of

Republicanism. "I just don't think we should go hellfire and damnation around the globe freeing people unless it is related to our own national security," he told Bob Woodward in 2004. He was right—and Republicans could do far worse than to produce more Fords.

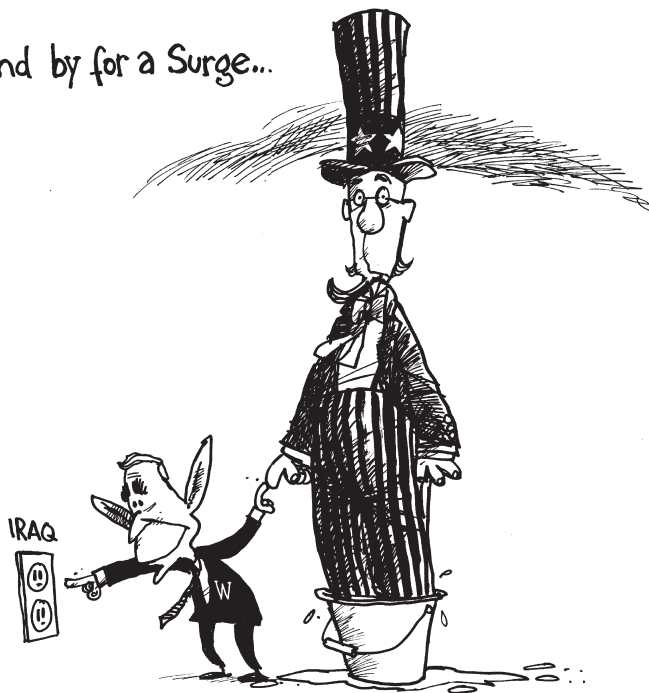
[IRAN]

MIDEAST DEMOCRATS

Though the rest of the world cringes and clucks each time he mounts a podium, these are dark days for Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In mid-December, he was forced to flee Iran's premier polytechnic institute when student protesters carrying "fascist president" banners cut short his speech, chanting "Death to the dictator." Even as Ahmadinejad tried to speed away, students kicked the doors of his limousine, causing the vehicles in his convoy to collide several times.

This augured a grim result for the candidates Ahmadinejad hand-picked to run in the first national referendum on his presidency. Just days later, when an unexpected 60 percent of Iranian voters cast their ballots for local councils and the Assembly of Experts—the clerical body that installs and supervises Iran's supreme religious leader—they delivered a major blow.

Ahmadinejad's candidates took only 20 percent of local council seats—the opposition now controls 13 of 15 seats on the Tehran council, a political bellwether.



TAB WWW.CAGLECARTOONS.COM

And the faction of reformer Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the two-term president Ahmadinejad routed in the 2005 election, dominated in the national vote for the Assembly of Experts.

Ahmadinejad hasn't delivered on his populist campaign promises. Iran's struggling economy is no better, its unemployment rate no lower than when he took office. When Iranians want economic prosperity and instead get a belligerent quest for nuclear power and talk of wiping Israel off the map, the president's men should get trounced at the polls—and they did.

This electoral rebuke won't soften Ahmadinejad's rhetoric or end his show-down with the West overnight. But the discontent he has produced among student activists and Iranian voters bodes well for the moderates and reformers who want Iran to engage the world rather than confronting it. America's own unpopular president might take note before he declares war on the only functioning Islamic democracy in the Middle East.

[WHITE HOUSE] LAWYERING UP

The president is preparing for another war—with Congress. First step: find a new general. White House Counsel Harriet Miers stepped down just as the Democrats are preparing to exercise their power of oversight. Bush advisers, worried that she wouldn't be able to withstand the scrutiny of Congressional subpoena power, drafted former Reagan counsel Fred Fielding.

Congress has endured Miers's response to questioning before. During the confirmation debacle surrounding her short-lived Supreme Court nomination, Sen. Patrick Leahy called her answers to the Senate questionnaire, "incomplete and insulting." Now incoming chair of the Judiciary Committee, Leahy has announced that he will hold

hearings on the administration's policies on torture and other human-rights issues. If Miers can't testify on her own behalf, she can't be expected to answer tough questions about Abu Ghraib, Gitmo, or possible war profiteering.

The pressure of an opposition is forcing the White House to finally prize competence over loyalty. For that alone, we can be thankful for divided government. But Miers's resignation also calls into question the judgment of a president who would entrust the Constitution to a woman who can't handle the defense of his own record.

[ELECTION] GAY TALK EXPRESS

One relevant vignette from Todd Purdum's *Vanity Fair* profile of John McCain has Mr. Straight Talk Express before an Iowa forum, pressed on the subject of gay marriage. "Should gay marriage be allowed?" Chris Matthews asks. McCain says "I think gay marriage should be allowed, if there's a ceremony kind of thing, if you want to call it that." An honest position, if not one *TAC* concurs with. But during the commercial break, McCain aide John Weaver whispered in the candidate's ear, and McCain interrupted an answer about a farm bill to say, "Could I just mention one other thing? On the issue of gay marriage, I believe that if people want to have private ceremonies, that's fine. I do not believe gay marriage should be legal." Later he hissed to Weaver, "Did I fix it, did I fix it?"

McCain will try to feign concurrence through the social gauntlet of the Republican primaries. But plain to all is the sincerity of his belief in neoconservative foreign policy: escalate in Iraq, bomb Iran, embroil America forever in Mideast wars. A false wrapping over a core of sheer madness—this is the GOP frontrunner in 2008, and the nation's most likely 44th president. ■

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Of Terrorists, Tyrants, & Martyrs

In life, Saddam Hussein was a pitiless tyrant. He had murdered thousands, been caught hiding in a rat hole with a weapon he failed to fire, and blustered

and bellowed at his trial for the mass execution of men and boys in reprisal for an attempt on his life.

Yet "Nothing in his life became him like the leaving of it."

Before transfer to his executioners, Saddam thanked each U.S. soldier who had guarded him. He entered the chamber with dignity. He answered with brave defiance taunts of "Moqtada, Moqtada, Moqtada" from the Shia thugs around him. And he fell to his death with a prayer of submission to Allah on his lips.

"Where, O death, is thy victory? Where, O death, is thy sting?"

The contrast between that manliness, and the callousness and crudity of those who hanged him and came to watch, has gone far to convert a Stalinist tyrant into a Sunni martyr of American imperialism and Shi'ite vengeance.

In death, Saddam now likely has more admirers in the Middle East than George W. Bush does in life. Such was the travesty of his execution. Though the hanging of Saddam was justified, why can we not learn from history that magnanimity in triumph is often wiser than a strict justice better left to higher authority?

Looking back, what did the burning of Joan of Arc do for the English? What did the guillotining of Marie Antoinette do for Robespierre and the Revolution?

Even the 1859 hanging of John Brown, witnessed by Union Col. Thomas J. Jackson, made a martyr to abolition of a terrorist who had perpetrated the massacre of Pottawatomie Creek.

In a letter to his wife, Jackson described Brown's death: "John Brown

was hung today. ... He behaved with unflinching firmness. ... and ascended the scaffold with apparent cheerfulness."

Compare, if you will, the thoughts that crossed the Christian mind of Stonewall Jackson, as Brown was hanged, to the conduct of that Shia execution party. Wrote Jackson to his beloved wife, "I was much impressed with the thought that before me stood a man, in the full vigor of health, who must in a few minutes be in eternity. I sent up a petition that he might be saved. Awful was the thought that he might in a few minutes receive the sentence 'Depart ye wicked into everlasting fire.' I hope that he was prepared to die, but I am very doubtful—he wouldn't have a minister with him."

Between Jackson's Christianity and today's radical Islam, the gulf is unbridgeable.

Though the British blundered eternally in the burning of Joan, they behaved wisely with Napoleon. Following his retreat from Russia, the Corsican who had set Europe ablaze and was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands was sent into exile on Elba. When he escaped and raised an army to meet Wellington at Waterloo and was defeated, Napoleon was not hanged, but exiled again, to St. Helena. He died a natural death, if one does not credit reports that he was slowly poisoned with arsenic.

The body of Napoleon rests in the church at Les Invalides. And because the British did not execute their emperor, France and Britain could come together to resist the German invasion of 1914.

Compare that British act of magnanimity with later British folly. On Easter Monday 1916, 2,000 rebels seized the General Post Office in Dublin and other public buildings. The conspirators were seen by Britons and many of their own countrymen as traitors, stabbing in the back the Mother Country and British army, in which thousands of their Irish kinsmen had enlisted.

Met by ridicule, facing superior firepower, the rebels capitulated in a week. Had their leaders been sentenced to long prison terms, the incident would have been over. But at this point, the British government committed what many consider its greatest blunder in seven centuries of dealing with Ireland. Fifteen rebels, including cultural nationalist Patrick Pearse and labor leader James Connolly, were sent before firing squads, creating 15 martyrs for Irish independence to be immortalized by Yeats:

I write it out in a verse—
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

With the execution of the rebels of the Easter Rising, the Home Rule Party of John Redmond that supported the war effort and urged Irishmen to enlist was finished, replaced in Irish hearts by Sinn Féin, the party of independence. The executions had elevated the bungling conspirators into the pantheon of Irish freedom fighters.

Within months of the war's end, the rebellion that would tear Ireland forever from England was underway. "In victory, magnanimity," said Churchill, who did not always practice what he preached. ■

Bush's Last Stand

Less than two months ago, many Americans thought they could see, if not the outlines of the end of the Iraq disaster, at least the beginnings of a rational course correction. Democratic victories in the House and Senate were rightly interpreted as

popular repudiation of Bush's war strategy. The president's relatively conciliatory remarks after the GOP defeat, along with the replacement of Donald Rumsfeld, signaled a reality check. And the Iraq Study Group report indicated that the foreign-policy establishment no longer considered victory possible. Most believed that its core conclusion had penetrated the presidential bubble, and Bush would accommodate in his way. Indeed, it seemed impossible that James Baker would have involved himself in the ISG enterprise without solid assurances that it would not be dismissed as an empty exercise.

Washington would change course, not as quickly and dramatically as it should, but the neoconservative fantasy of forcibly "democratizing" the Middle East would no longer be the guiding light of American foreign policy.

But we underestimated the stubbornness and self-centeredness of George W. Bush. When he said in his address to the nation, "It is clear that we need to change our strategy in Iraq," he admitted no flaw in the premise—only a failure to prosecute it more zealously. By escalating the war—the deceptive public-relations term is "surge," which sounds more transitory than a substantial troop increase—Bush ensures that the Iraq debacle will outlive his administration. Far from minimizing the price of folly, the president does not rule out using Iraq as a platform to confront a new round of enemies. His speech implicated both Syria and Iran in nourishing the Iraqi insurgency.

Thousands more American troops may die. Al-Qaeda will keep recruiting off the rage that a foreign occupation army inflames throughout the Muslim world. The bills will continue to mount even as America's standing in the world declines. But the endgame will be the next president's problem.

Curiously enough, this stunningly selfish calculation has the unspoken complicity of several big fish in Democratic Party, who would rather campaign against the Iraq War in 2008 than take real steps to end it now. Look for them to complain, hold hearings, and bloviate at press conferences. Don't hold your breath waiting for them to use their constitutional powers to stop its escalation.

If there were any substantial chance that an additional 20,000 American troops could "do the job" in Iraq, wouldn't the military commanders who have been trying to fight the

war for the past four years have asked? They have not, recognizing that adding more Americans will have no impact on the creation of a unified Iraqi army and will only give the insurgents more targets.

On Nov. 15, Gen. John Abizaid, the outgoing head of Central Command and one of the few Arabic speakers with an authoritative position in the U.S. government, told the Senate Armed Services Committee, "I met with every divisional commander, General Casey, the Corps commander, General Dempsey. We all talked together. And I said, in your professional opinion, if we were to bring in more American troops now, does it add considerably to our ability to achieve success in Iraq? And they all said no." Oliver North, the Fox News commentator and Iran-Contra figure hardly known for his dovishness, recently returned from Iraq saying that "not one" service member he spoke to thought more troops were the answer, and "nearly all" said "just the opposite."

The fact is that no major Iraqi constituency except the Kurds wants an extended American presence in the country. Majorities of both Shia and Sunnis now tell pollsters they support terrorist attacks against the Americans; one reason the improvised explosive devices that kill and maim Americans almost every day are so effective is that Iraqis no longer warn U.S. troops about them.

The escalation option was cooked up at the American Enterprise Institute, a warmongers' den desperate to salvage its own reputation. The neoconservatives who pushed it along are same people who have been wrong about every aspect of the Iraq fiasco, from Saddam's supposed stocks of WMD to the idea that Shia-Sunni divisions are exaggerated and inconsequential. But they have President Bush's ear and found a White House desperate to save face.

Escalation appeals to George W. Bush's deepest desire: to avoid the consequences of his earlier blunders. So the troops will march in—twice as many, sources tell us, as the 20,000 the president is claiming. And the insurgents will do as they have done during past surges: go dormant and flow around the impacted areas. They have popular support in the ethnic communities that sustain them, and they know American troops won't remain in Iraq forever.

—The Editors

[the gambler]

Going for Broke

Endorsing the Baker report would have meant denouncing his entire foreign policy, so Bush is betting everything on the neocons' surge.

By Andrew J. Bacevich

NOTHING SO CLEARLY reveals the impoverished state of American political discourse as the ongoing debate over finding "a way forward" in Iraq. Broadly speaking, that debate pits a resurgent foreign-policy establishment, led by James Baker, against embattled neo-conservatives, with Frederick Kagan of the American Enterprise Institute their improbable champion. On the surface, Baker and Kagan represent irreconcilable views. Beneath the surface, they are engaged in a common enterprise: deflecting attention from the contradictions that beset U.S. policy in the Middle East.

Baker, the trusted Bush family factotum, resurfaced most recently as co-chair, along with former Congressman Lee Hamilton, of the Iraq Study Group. Almost without fail, media references to the Baker-Hamilton commission emphasize its bipartisan composition as if that alone were enough to win a Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval. Yet to imagine that bipartisanship signifies wisdom or reflects a concern for the common good is to misunderstand the reality of present-day politics. The true purpose of bipartisanship is to protect the interests of the Washington Party, the conglomeration of politicians, hustlers, and bureaucrats who benefit from the concentration of wealth and power in the federal city. A "bipartisan" solution to any problem is one that produces

marginal change while preserving or restoring the underlying status quo.

In this regard, the Baker-Hamilton report, issued as signs of impending failure in Iraq were becoming incontrovertible, was intended to do two things. Most obviously, it offered George W. Bush political cover to begin extricating the United States from Iraq. Yet that offer came at a price: by endorsing the ISG package of 79 recommendations—Baker pointedly warned against treating them as a "fruit salad"—the president would effectively repudiate his entire post-9/11 approach to foreign policy. To embrace the ISG's findings meant renouncing unilateralism, engaging adversaries rather than castigating them as "evil," and valuing stability over the promulgation of any Freedom Agenda. In effect, it meant steering the United States back toward the course that Secretary of State Baker had charted when working for Daddy Bush. After a lost weekend spent binging on the intoxicating liquor of Wilsonianism, the president would return to the path of sobriety.

Neoconservatives instantly grasped the nature of the threat: the issue at hand was not simply Iraq. Neocons have long loathed Baker as an unprincipled wheeler-dealer (and barely closeted anti-Semite). Now here was their nemesis leading the Old Guard in an assault on their most cherished convictions. If Bush took the bait—if he chose to cut

his losses in Iraq—the effect would be to discredit their entire approach to foreign policy. Neoconservative hopes of "transforming" the Islamic world, banishing tyranny from the face of the earth, and securing permanent global domination based on unquestioned military supremacy all would be dashed.

So neoconservatives launched a fierce—at times hysterical—counterattack. Among their several complaints, one in particular stood out: Baker and Hamilton based their conclusions on the assumption that victory in Iraq lay beyond reach. Neocon critics portrayed this as the ultimate heresy. Any admission of failure in Iraq was premature, they insisted. The war there had to be won, and it could be won.

Enter Frederick Kagan. A lesser light in the neoconservative constellation, Kagan had for months been flogging his own scheme for turning the tide in Iraq. From his perch at 17th and M Street, it all appeared quite simple: rather than looking for ways to turn the war over to the Iraqis, it was time for American commanders to get serious about winning. They needed to quash the insurgency and secure the population, thereby creating conditions for economic reconstruction and political "reconciliation." Above all, winning meant sending more G.I.'s to Iraq and especially into Baghdad, which Kagan identified as the decisive battlefield.

Here was the neoconservative response to James Baker: the imperative of the moment was not to withdraw but to surge.

In a series of articles, op-eds, and interviews, Kagan argued his case with remarkable sangfroid. Writing in *The Weekly Standard*, he insisted that enlarging the U.S. troop commitment was “the only option likely to bring peace to Iraq.” It made no sense to consider any of the proposed alternatives: “All will fail.” Dismissing concerns of senior military officers that American forces were about tapped out, Kagan did his own arithmetic and found it “obvious that there are many more troops to send.” Kagan had equally little patience for complaints that units recently returned from the war zone needed time to refit before another tour. If it proved necessary to “send forces that are not as well trained as one would like,” then so be it, he wrote. Although the army chief of staff had recently gone on record worrying that his service might crack under the stress of repeated deployments, Kagan was having none of it: “The Army will not break with this proposal.” And if the Pentagon needed additional forces to sustain the surge, Kagan had a ready solution. In his AEI report “Choosing Victory,” he counseled President Bush to “issue a personal call for young Americans to volunteer to fight in the decisive conflict of this age.”

Only when it came to the dimensions of the surge did Kagan’s assurance slip. In early December 2006, he was insisting that 80,000 reinforcements were needed. As he refined his plan, that number shrunk. By year’s end he concluded that a mere 30,000 additional troops would suffice. Did this adjustment reflect Kagan’s perception that the task was becoming easier? Were conditions in Iraq somehow improving? Or was Kagan tacitly acknowledging that the Pentagon did not after all have

“many more troops to send”? He offered no explanation.

What can we say of this proposal? Simply this: to imagine that 170,000 troops will accomplish what 140,000 troops failed to do in nearly four years or that marching a handful of additional combat brigades into the maw of Baghdad will snatch victory from the jaws of defeat qualifies as pure fantasy. Kagan’s “surge” is the first cousin to Kenneth Adelman’s more famous “cakewalk.” It is ideology dressed up as strategy. Marketed as the product of careful analysis, the surge should be seen for what it is: a naked gamble. Tacitly acknowledging the point, some proponents even refer to it as the “double down” option.

That in places like AEI and the editorial offices of *The Weekly Standard* Kagan himself has emerged as the man of the hour testifies to the depth of neoconservative desperation. Kagan’s insistence that his surge will do the trick postpones the neoconservative day of reckoning. Believe Kagan and you can

the reality of that war concocted their own version of a surge strategy. At the urging of Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Earle Wheeler, Gen. William C. Westmoreland, the senior U.S. field commander, floated a request to deploy an additional 206,000 G.I.’s to South Vietnam. Whatever else might be said of Westmoreland’s proposal (which President Lyndon Johnson immediately rejected), it possessed a certain demented grandeur. Even with over a half-million U.S. troops already in Vietnam, throwing in a couple hundred thousand more qualified as a surge in just about anyone’s book. By comparison, Kagan’s proposal looks positively puny. It looks puny because it is.

“The United States faces a dire situation in Iraq,” Kagan loftily explained in a recent *Washington Post* op-ed, “because of a history of half-measures.” Now, he would have us believe, is the time to pull out all the stops. But Kagan’s so-called surge really amounts to yet another half-measure. Other than forfeiting the lives

KAGAN’S “SURGE” IS THE FIRST COUSIN TO KENNETH ADELMAN’S MORE FAMOUS “CAKEWALK.” IT IS IDEOLOGY DRESSED UP AS STRATEGY.

avoid for at least a bit longer having to confront Iraq’s incontrovertible lessons: that preventive war doesn’t work, that American power has limits, that the world is not infinitely malleable, and that grasping for “benign global hegemony” is a self-defeating proposition.

Indeed, the very niggardliness of Kagan’s plan testifies to the core problem to which neoconservatives refuse to own up. Between their professed aspirations and the means at hand to pursue those aspirations there yawns a massive gap.

Consider this: at the equivalent moment in the Vietnam War—immediately following the 1968 Tet Offensive—those most obstinately in denial about

of more American soldiers and adding to the billions already wasted in Iraq, it will accomplish little. As for Kagan’s expectation that a presidential summons to the colors will produce a stampede of fresh recruits, anyone who buys that will also believe in the tooth fairy.

So if Kagan got it wrong, does it follow that Baker got it right? The short answer is no, except perhaps in a tactical sense.

Viewed as an immediate response to a crisis fast slipping out of control, the various prescriptions offered by the Iraq Study Group do possess considerable merit. Although the damage done to American interests by this misguided war

cannot be undone, there exists an urgent need to contain that damage, to stanch our losses, and to prevent the entire Persian Gulf from plunging into chaos. Considered in this context, Baker's call for a phased withdrawal of combat troops, his insistence on establishing milestones to spur improvements in the Iraqi government's performance, and his proposed diplomatic initiative aimed at fostering regional support for stabilizing Iraq all make sense. Reinvigorating the so-called peace process, another Baker recommendation, also deserves consideration, not in the vain hope of producing peace, but to counter the (largely accurate) perception that the U.S. government has never really cared about the plight of the Palestinian people.

As a prescription for strategy, however, the Baker-Hamilton report flunks for the most fundamental of reasons: it neglects the little matter of how the United States got into this fix in the first place. As they went about their work, the one subject that members of the Iraq Study Group stubbornly avoided was the past.

This convenient amnesia allowed the ISG to overlook a record of bipartisan bungling and shortsightedness extending over a period of decades. Franklin D. Roosevelt got the ball rolling in 1945, promising protection to the House of Saud in exchange for preferred access to Saudi oil. Dwight D. Eisenhower made his own distinctive contribution, engineering a coup in Tehran and forging a fateful partnership with the Shah. John F. Kennedy chipped in with another CIA-assisted coup, this one bringing the Ba'ath Party to power in Baghdad. Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon affirmed the Iranian connection and added another, establishing a costly "special relationship" with Israel. When revolutionaries tossed the Shah out on his ear, Jimmy Carter upped the ante: under the terms of the Carter Doctrine, the United States vowed henceforth to

use any means necessary to secure its interests in the Gulf.

From this point, the pace of events quickened. U.S. commitments multiplied. Costs skyrocketed. American leverage waned. That U.S. policy yielded benefits for Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, and large multinational oil companies seemed clear enough. That it was serving the long-term interests of the American people was becoming far less clear.

Celebrated by neoconservatives as a man of vision and principle, Ronald Reagan manifested neither of these qualities when it came to the Middle East. In Lebanon, he flung away the lives of 241 U.S. troops to no purpose except perhaps to raise questions about American will. After establishing a tacit anti-Iranian alliance with Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, Reagan okayed a hare-brained scheme to funnel U.S. weapons to Tehran. Iran-Contra became Reagan's trifecta: a policy that was simultaneously stupid, illegal, and an embarrassing failure. Meanwhile, just off-stage in the Petri dish of Soviet-occupied Afghanistan, Reagan's policies inadvertently served to cultivate the bacillus of Islamic radicalism.

Reagan's successor, George H.W. Bush, assisted by then Secretary of State James Baker, took the final plunge. With his invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Saddam Hussein outlived his usefulness to the United States. Operation Desert Storm, Bush's attempt to remove the Iraqi dictator from the scene, came up short. Not for the last time an ostensibly historic victory over Iraq left in its wake a problematic legacy. Policing the Gulf now became a full-time job. To keep Saddam in his box and the mullahs at bay, Bush scattered a network of quasi-permanent military garrisons across the region. Bill Clinton inherited this mare's nest and then proceeded to fritter away eight years bombing Iraq to little effect and absorbing terrorist attacks on American forces and installations.

This dispiriting narrative—from FDR's encounter with Ibn Saud on the Great Bitter Lake to the near-sinking of the *USS Cole* at Aden 55 years later—left a peculiar imprint on members of the Washington Party. The blowback from ill-advised policies served to whet their appetite for more of the same.

By the time George W. Bush became president, Republicans and Democrats alike subscribed to a common set of dubious assumptions: that the Persian Gulf represents a vital strategic interest, permanent and inescapable; that Gulf nations are incapable of managing their own affairs; that the United States, therefore, has no alternative but to determine the fate of this region; that American power and prestige, guided by distinguished statesmen in the mold of James Baker and Lee Hamilton, will suffice to do just that; that peace and prosperity for all lie just around the corner, if only Americans will persist a bit longer.

Here lies the ultimate purpose of the Iraq Study Group: to shield these assumptions from critical scrutiny. Perpetuating the Great Game of the modern Middle East ensures that the flow of oil, arms, and contracts continues without interruption. As long as the Game goes on, it provides a rationale for the endless comings-and-goings of important personages engaged in "the search for peace." Think tanks churn out policy papers by the score. Lobbying firms prosper. Guests on Sunday morning talk shows prattle on about the latest crisis. Recruited to serve on blue-ribbon commissions, high governmental officials from yesteryear relive their glory days. The Game is its own reward. For members of the Washington Party, its preservation qualifies as a categorical imperative.

When it comes to U.S. policy in the Middle East, neither the cavalier urgings of Frederick Kagan nor the confident reassurances of James Baker will provide the basis for defining a "way for-

ward.” Despite superficial differences, their prescriptions point in the same direction: they will simply exacerbate our predicament. Further militarizing U.S. policy, always the first choice of neoconservatives, will only compound our dilemma; yet so too will deference to self-appointed Wise Men, who created that dilemma in the first place.

Neoconservatives like Kagan believe that the United States is called upon to remake the Middle East, bringing the light of freedom to a dark quarter of the world. Pseudo-realists like Baker believe that the United States can manipulate events in the Middle East, persuading others to do our bidding. Both views, rooted in the conviction that Providence has endowed America with a unique capacity to manage history, are pernicious.

The way forward requires abandoning that conviction in favor of a fundamentally different course. A sound Middle East strategy will restore American freedom of action by ending our dependence on Persian Gulf oil. It will husband our power by using American soldiers to defend America rather than searching abroad for dragons to destroy. A sound strategy will tend first to the cultivation of our own garden.

A real course change will require a different compass, different navigational charts, and perhaps above all different helmsmen, admitting into the debate those who earn their livelihoods far from the imperial city on the Potomac. A foreign policy worthy of the name will reflect the concerns and aspirations of ordinary Americans. It's that last prospect that Frederick Kagan and James Baker most fear. ■

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Corruption is now so prevalent in Iraq that fully one-third of all rebuilding contracts are under criminal investigation by the U.S. Special Inspector for Iraq Reconstruction.

Wholesale smuggling of oil and the pandemic of corruption constitute a second insurgency that threatens the survival of the Iraqi state as much as the armed insurgency does. Pipelines are deliberately blown up, forcing the oil to be moved by truck. When it is moved by truck, it is easily diverted to middlemen in Turkey, Jordan, and Kuwait, where it is sold directly into the black market, making oil-rich Iraq a net importer of petroleum products. The official guesstimate is that corruption is costing Iraq at least \$4 billion per year, though the actual cost is undoubtedly much higher. Ironically, at least \$300 million and possibly much more of the money derived from corruption is used to support the insurgents and militias currently fighting American troops. More than 14,000 U.S.-supplied automatic weapons are known to be unaccounted for, though that might just be the tip of the iceberg, as only 10,000 of the 370,000 weapons the U.S. Army gave to Iraqis were registered by serial number, meaning that many of them might have wound up in the hands of sectarian militias and the insurgency.



The problem with a foreign policy enthusiastically embracing regime change is that it does not provide opportunities for alternative policies to emerge that might better support the U.S. national interest.

The recent report of the Iraq Study Group highlighted significant errors in the Pentagon's Iraq intelligence, noting that Donald Rumsfeld's intelligence system misconstrued or withheld information that contradicted the Bush administration's Iraq policy of removing Saddam Hussein. The frank report also says that the administration promoted inaccurate data and assertions to support its publicly stated policy goals for Iraq through back-channel intelligence operations that drew on information provided by dubious and previously discredited sources, such as Manucher Ghorbanifar and Ahmad Chalabi. The White House, which has chosen to ignore the ISG, has now established a top-secret committee called the Iran Syria Policy and Operations Group (ISOG), which has been working on political containment and regime change for Damascus and Tehran, again relying on unverifiable intelligence collected from "dissidents." The committee, which is made up of senior officials from a number of departments and agencies, is so secret that even the State Department's Near Eastern Affairs Bureau was unaware of its existence until the media publicized it last week. Early next year, the ISOG intends to ask Congress for a major budget increase to help develop its regional policies. The Democratic majority will likely be supportive because Israel is pushing an agenda similar to the ISOG's. The group's steering committee is chaired by a former State Department Assistant Secretary for the Near East James Jeffrey, who is regarded as a hawk, and Deputy National Security Adviser Elliot Abrams, a leading neocon hardliner. The activity of the ISOG is reminiscent of the similarly ideologically driven Pentagon's Office of Special Plans, which contributed significantly to America's involvement in Iraq.

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Fight Now—Pay Later

Guns and tax cuts are no more compatible than guns and butter.

By W. James Antle III

FOR MOST OF George W. Bush's presidency, tax cuts and military interventionism have together defined the Republican agenda. The GOP minority in the new Democratic-controlled Congress will spend much of the next two years trying to fight off reversals on both fronts. But the party and its conservative governing coalition could soon face a more fundamental challenge. What happens if the neoconservatives' foreign policy runs up a larger bill than the supply-siders' tax rates can pay?

The days of promoting democracy on the cheap may be coming to a close. Light footprints and streamlined forces appear to have gone the way of Donald Rumsfeld, replaced by proposals for a bigger Army and Marine Corps. President Bush has endorsed the idea, telling reporters "I am inclined to believe we do need to increase our troops" so they can perform "the many tasks we ask of them." Eager to burnish their national-security credentials, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid also support a larger military, as did John Kerry during his 2004 presidential campaign.

Yet expanding the Armed Forces will inevitably cost money. Congressional Democrats are predictably uninterested in trimming domestic spending to meet these new obligations; the Bush administration will likely resist any significant retrenchment of existing U.S. military commitments. If forced to pick between the president's tax cuts and funding a bigger fighting machine, which would Washington's most vocal hawks choose?

The dilemma already has Democratic pundits chortling that the neoconservatives were sold a bill of goods when they backed the Bush tax cuts originally. Liberal hawk Jonathan Chait, writing in the *Los Angeles Times*, chided *The Weekly Standard* for its innumeracy in supporting both the tax reductions and the Iraq War: "But if they had only withdrawn their support earlier, before the big tax cut and before Bush invaded with too small of an army to win, the United States would be in much better shape today—and so would the neocons."

Washington Post columnist E.J. Dionne is more dovish but just as caustic in his assessment of the neoconservative fiscal and foreign-policy mix. "Believe it or not," he wrote, "winning the war in Iraq was never the Bush administration's highest priority. Saving its tax cuts was more important." Dionne concluded that neoconservatives "claimed to be against big government so they could justify big tax cuts. But they were also for a big, activist foreign policy, especially after Sept. 11, 2001, which required a big military and—sorry to break it to you, guys—a big military is a big part of big government."

For the most part, it is true that—in keeping with their traditional roles in the conservative movement—the hawks went along with the tax cuts while the supply-siders accepted an activist foreign policy. Frank Gaffney of the Center for Security Policy, for example, argued in a 2001 open letter to President Bush that lower taxes would actually help strengthen national defense.

"Those of us who look forward to helping you succeed in your efforts to rebuild our defense posture appreciate that your success in reducing taxes is a first and highly synergistic step toward that goal," he wrote. "Consequently, you can count on us in the national-security community to support you in both these important endeavors." Gaffney explained that accelerated economic growth would "facilitate" a "very substantial recapitalization of the armed forces."

But there have been signs that some hawks are uncomfortable with the political trade-offs the GOP has made. Ben Stein is no stranger to supply-side economics. His father was credited by longtime *Wall Street Journal* editor Robert Bartley with coining a variant of the phrase. The younger Stein is an economist himself; he even discussed the intricacies of the Laffer curve in his role in the classic film "Ferris Bueller's Day Off." Yet he has become a critic of the GOP policy of cutting taxes during wartime.

"If we really mean to win [the war], let's get serious and have a much, much bigger Army and tax ourselves enough to pay for it," Stein wrote in his *American Spectator* diary. "Wars are not won by tax cuts." The celebrity pundit has even criticized Bush's tax cuts for benefiting wealthier taxpayers: "Can't we at least have a small tax increase for the very rich? There are so many very rich and they have money to burn. (I know. I live among them.)"

While few conservatives would go that far, Stein isn't quite alone. Writing in *The Weekly Standard* back in 2003,

economist Irwin Stelzer worried that the Bush administration didn't seem interested in finding a way to pay for its ambitious Middle Eastern foreign policy—or very much else, for that matter. “In the Micawberesque world of Bushonomics, [the president's expansions of government] are all free lunches: Taxpayers will simultaneously get these and other benefits, and tax refunds, and tax reductions to boot.”

At the time, Stelzer was careful to mention the Medicare prescription-drug benefit and other big-ticket items from the domestic compassionate-conservative catalog in his critique. He also avoided calling for any specific tax increases. Three years later, while acknowledging salutary economic effects of the Bush tax cuts, Stelzer was more direct about his desire for additional revenues.

Last October in *The Weekly Standard*, Stelzer argued that deficit spending was constraining U.S. foreign policy. He

ready to retire. But in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed last November, Frum came out in favor of imposing a carbon tax on gasoline, natural gas, jet fuel, propane, and coal.

Frum said the levy would be justifiable in part to help shrink Medicare and Social Security's unfunded liabilities, but he also seeks a revenue source for his foreign-policy preferences. “At the same time, the United States must pay for the long war against Islamic extremism,” he later explained on public radio. “Yet the United States spends one-third less now than we did 20 years ago on national defense—only about four and a half percent of national income.”

“We conservatives hate to see new taxes,” Frum continued. “But sometimes a new tax is the necessary price for eliminating an old tax. Almost 100 years ago, the United States replaced many of its high tariffs with an income tax—a good move, even the most taxophobic of us would agree.”

MCCAIN WOULD LIKELY PRESERVE THE BUSH TAX CUTS IF HE COULD—BUT NOT AT THE RISK OF HIS FOREIGN-POLICY OBJECTIVES.

wrote that “when those deficits result in stacks of IOUs held by China, America's diplomats are forced to walk softly, lest they antagonize so large a creditor.” To come up with extra revenue and curtail terrorist funding, Stelzer called for “a substantial tax on imported oil, or on gasoline.” Yet he conceded such a policy was unlikely because “that would require the president to demand sacrifice of the American people, something he is unprepared to do.”

David Frum, one of the more libertarian-leaning neoconservatives, is against repealing any of the Bush tax cuts. He argues that it would be unwise to increase taxes on saving and investment while the baby boomers are getting

At this point, you may be saying: perhaps some conservative pundits and policy wonks are tax-cut contrarians, but surely no Republican elected official would dare call for new taxes. Such a move would seem especially foolhardy since taxpayer groups are already watching closely to make sure the GOP doesn't raise taxes as part of a Social Security reform deal.

Except that there is one major Republican politician who could hypothetically be persuaded to raise taxes as part of a call for shared wartime sacrifice—and he happens to be a front-runner for the 2008 GOP presidential nomination. Sen. John McCain has favored a larger military for years; he is also one of Con-

gress's strongest supporters of a troop surge in Iraq. He is not a hardliner on taxes, however.

McCain called for higher taxes as part of a tobacco settlement in the late 1990s and rebuffed supply-siders during his 2000 presidential campaign. The Arizonan was one of only two Senate Republicans to vote against the original Bush tax cuts in 2001. (The other was Lincoln Chafee.) He also opposed the next major round of tax cuts in 2003, forcing a tie-breaking vote by Vice President Dick Cheney.

It is doubtful that McCain would make higher taxes a part of his presidential platform. He would likely preserve the Bush tax cuts if he could—but not at the risk of his foreign-policy objectives.

Perhaps such a choice will never have to be made. Pay-as-you-go budget rules, divided government, and a dangerous world all could force both parties to become more realistic about their spending priorities. Washington's consensus about the size of the military may shift yet again. Economic growth, stimulated in part by the tax cuts, may continue to swell federal coffers—America's economy expanded through concomitant tax cuts and defense increases during the Reagan years. Or the U.S. could make changes in its foreign policy.

Otherwise, budgetary trends could move in a direction that threatens Republican unity. Neoconservatives would tire of pursuing what Jonathan Chait describes as “Dick Cheney's foreign policy with Bill Clinton's army.” Small-government conservatives would become irritated with GOP politicians acting as tax collectors for the warfare state. And the Bush era could end up being remembered as the final act of fiscal conservatism. ■

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I Hate Therefore I Am

How outrage at particular policy became rage for its own sake

By Peter Wood

THE ANGRY TONE of contemporary politics shuts down many conversations before they begin. People don't want to expose themselves to the bottled brine that is passed around as though it were sparkling wit. Enjoying the company of acquaintances who espouse political opinions that differ from one's own is a civilized art fast fading from backyard barbecues and park benches—and nearly extinct in op-ed pages. The deftness required in ribbing the other guy and responding in good humor when he ribs you has been replaced by callow mockery, sneering self-righteousness, and annihilating fury.

Describing today's vitriolic political rhetoric, Alan Wolfe recently invoked the 18th-century pamphleteers who warmed up the American public for the Revolution and their 19th-century successors who struggled to define the character of the Republic:

We had partisanship even before we had parties. Our framers warned against the dangers of faction because we so rarely stood together. If you prefer your invective unseasoned by decorum, check out what the anti-Federalists had to say about the Constitution or how Whigs treated 'King Andrew' Jackson.

Mud-flinging and apocalyptic pronouncements are key ingredients in the American political tradition. But Wolfe is only half right. Then as now, political diatribes could be wildly over-the-top. Righteous anger was on display, and the

polemicists could seem distempered. But the pamphleteers lacked the elaborate self-centeredness of today's media-savvy screech owls. They offered arguments—wobbly, overstated, and tedious—but arguments nonetheless. Nowhere did they resort to today's familiar conceit in which the writer says, in effect, "I am right because I am personally very, very angry."

A New Anger has added to the mix an I-hate-therefore-I-am smugness. Here are the opening lines of Jonathan Chait's pivotal article, "Mad about You," which appeared in September 2003 in *The New Republic*:

I hate President George W. Bush. There, I said it. I think his policies rank him among the worst presidents in U.S. history. And, while I am tempted to leave it at that, the truth is that I hate him for less substantive reasons, too. I hate the inequitable way he has come to his economic and political achievements and his utter lack of humility...

Outright Bush-hatred was already well established on the fringes of the American Left, but mainstream commentators held back out of a slight and lingering sense of decorum. Chait's essay announced that it was now permissible, perhaps even "responsible," for the Left to embrace its hatred publicly.

Like swimmers pushing off a wall as they turn to do another lap, angry Democrats routinely touch on the era of Clinton-bashing. Recalling the nasty treatment of Clinton provides an extra

thrust for the next lap of flailing against Bush. But an account of the angry Right and the angry Left that treats their antics as merely the contemporary version of the age-old spoiled-sportsmanship of American politics is too blunt. Something new has entered the picture.

Contrast the anger of the protesters at the 1968 Democratic convention and the anger of a protester at an earlier Democratic convention in Chicago. William Jennings Bryan, at the 1896 convention, declared on behalf of struggling farmers, "You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold." *The Yippie Manifesto*, published eight months before the 1968 convention commands, "Rise up and abandon the creeping meatball!"

Bryan's language, full of righteous indignation and bleeding with Christian imagery, aims to establish a boundary. Nothing in it reveals the inner life and yearnings of Bryan. *The Yippie Manifesto*, on the other hand, is jokey and at pains to display its irreverence. "Rise up and abandon the creeping meatball!" doesn't sound angry at all, but of course it is addressed to companions not to adversaries. By the last paragraph, however, the happy countercultural parade gives way to a vehement tone:

The life of the American spirit is being torn asunder by the forces of violence, decay, and the napalm-cancer fiend. ... We are the delicate spores of the new fierceness that will change America. We

will create our own reality, we are Free America! And we will not accept the false theater of the Death Convention.

Bryan's anger focused on real people who advocated a particular policy; *The Yippie Manifesto* attacks a demonized vagueness. Bryan worried about mid-western farmers; *The Yippie Manifesto* farms out the "delicate spores of the new fierceness," which is as perfect an instance of precious, narcissistic, preening New Anger that we are likely to find.

Wolfe's reminder that anger has often been part of American politics thus seems to blur the moment when political anger went from summoning fierceness for a particular cause to imagining fierceness as a permanent form of self-therapy. From the 1930s through the 1950s, people who were ecstatically angry about political issues would more likely have been hospitalized than treated as celebrities. Times change.

In the 1990s, many Republicans seemed to have absorbed the new cultural premise that expressing fury was an appropriate way for adults to engage in politics. The corner we turned in 2000 might be summarized as the difference between the conservatives who expressed outrage at Clinton and the leftists who expressed rage at Bush. Outrage is anger framed as indignation over a violation of principle; rage is uncontrolled anger that, in its frenzy, owes little to violated principles. Republicans attacked Clinton by stating, "He lied under oath." Democrats attacked Bush with the less punctilious, "He lied." Conservatives looked at Clinton with disgust, as a man whose personal qualities made him unworthy of office. Liberals look on Bush with disdain, as a man too stupid to be taken seriously.

By today's standards, the censoriousness of mainstream Clinton critics seems almost genteel and the anger tinged with

disappointment. Much of the rhetoric was angry and some of it reflected showmanship, as writers competed for the image or phrase that most perfectly expressed their contempt. Yet those attacks lacked the distilled venom of "I hate President George W. Bush." Clinton-hatred was genuine, but the era had no real equivalent to "Buck Fush" buttons.

Conservatives have been relatively slow to realize that they are up against a new cultural phenomenon. Brian C. Anderson in the spring 2001 issue of *City Journal* argued that the 1990s brought an increasing volume of name calling, mostly by the Left, and catches what sets these insults apart from normal political raucousness:

It has become a habit of left-liberal political argument to use such invective to dismiss conservative beliefs as if they don't deserve an argument and to redefine mainstream conservative arguments as extremism and bigotry.

He touches on political theorist Peter Berkowitz's observation that followers of philosopher John Rawls had adopted a conception of justice that "by fiat proclaims unreasonable and places beyond the pale of public discussion the considered views of many Catholics, Protestants and Jews." Anderson adds:

All you can learn from such a conception is how thoughtlessly dismissive is the contemporary liberal attitude, even at its most intellectual, toward principled conservatism. A recent seminar discussion among liberal philosophy professors on how to deal with moral conflicts over abortion, homosexuality, and pornography shows just how thoughtless. One professor, a disciple of John Stuart Mill, argued that in a free society, traditional values at least need debate. The others, Rawls-

sians to a man, responded: No way. 'Why should we listen to loons?' one prominent liberal philosopher opined. 'We should just crush them.'

Anderson spotted the tsunami racing toward shore but failed to identify the emotional dynamic of this political wave and how the new absolutism of the Left was the product of a cultural transformation.

In September 2003, Robert Bartley, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, diagnosed the Democrats' anger as resentment over a lost "birthright." He suggested that "base Democrats think of themselves as the best people: the most intelligent and informed, the most public spirited, the most morally pure." With loss of power in Washington came loss of something more profound—self-identity: "Indeed, inner doubts about their own moral position is one obvious path to anger." Bartley concluded that Democratic anger is the reflex of "an establishment in the process of being replaced."

Soon afterward, the columnist Charles Krauthammer suggested that Democrats might be collectively suffering from a syndrome called "secondary mania," which he punditized as "Bush Derangement Syndrome: the acute onset of paranoia in otherwise normal people in reaction to the policies, the presidency—nay—the very existence of George W. Bush."

As a conservative critique of the Democrats' debauch into rage-politics began to take shape, the rage itself intensified. In January 2004, MoveOn announced the winner of a contest for an anti-Bush advertisement, for which they had set aside \$15 million. The winner depicts children working on assembly lines "to pay off President Bush's \$1 trillion deficit." MoveOn posted many of the 1,500 entries on its website, including two that compare Bush to Hitler. Jack Pitney, a political scientist at Claremont

Colleges, told a reporter, “The MoveOn material in general and the ads in particular are designed to make angry people even angrier, but they don’t necessarily broaden the anti-Bush coalition.”

That description seems to fit the emotional trajectory of New Anger as a spectacle to be witnessed by an appreciative audience, not an attempt to win over the uncommitted. For anger to persuade, it has to be held back and forced to fuel more subtle suasions. Anger unleashed can hope only to intimidate a foe or impress a friend. It is not a strategy for winning over the undecided.

Shortly after John Kerry sealed the Democratic nomination, *USA Today* ran an article under the headline “Voter Anger Alone Can’t Capture the White House.” The article took as fact that the Democratic primaries had been shaped by “fury toward Bush,” which it compared vaguely to the earlier fury toward Clinton. Within six months of Chait’s “I hate President George W. Bush” manifesto and Bartley’s “Angry Democrats—Lost Birthright” column, the assessment of the Democrats as seething with anger had moved from the elite opinion makers to *USA Today*’s version of received wisdom.

A handful of articles stand out for their attempts to make sense of this new political style. In the *Wall Street Journal*, Stephen Miller notes, “John Kerry is angry—and he wants voters to know it.” The anger in question is not a matter of private seething, nor is it focused primarily on an opponent. It is intended for display. Miller also observes, “Righteous anger is for many Americans a good thing: a sign of one’s commitment and integrity, and not just in politics.” He notes that Dean’s anger “was a symbol of his authenticity as an ‘outsider’ candidate.” Miller captures three key qualities of New Anger: it is performed for an audience; it extends across party lines and beyond politics; and it is grounded

on claims of personal authenticity.

In June 2004, as public recognition of an exceptional degree of anger was settling in, John Tierney in the *New York Times* offered a fresh rebuttal. He focused on studies purporting to show “that the polarized nation is largely a myth created by people inside the Beltway talking to each other or, more precisely, shouting at each other.” In this account, the anger is real but mostly confined to political elites.

Tierney’s main source was Stanford political scientist Morris P. Fiorina, who with two colleagues, Samuel J. Abrams and Jeremy C. Pope, had written a book, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, attempting to demonstrate that majorities support gun control, the death penalty, and abortion and oppose racial preferences. Tierney also found support in the work of Princeton sociol-

where do interest groups get their popular support? Who are the donors so moved by the defeat of their ideas that they redouble their contributions? Who are the readers, listeners, and watchers who provide lucrative livings to the media hotheads? Who are the partisan voters that turn out for the primaries? They are obviously not all members of the political elite.

If we look for the culture war as a matter of constant, heated disagreement among ordinary people, we will fail to find it. Most Americans are passive consumers of culture rather than active combatants. They participate in the culture war only to the extent they cannot avoid it. The existence of noncombatants, however, doesn’t mean there’s no war.

Surveys are a weak way to get at some of the deep disagreements in American life. Two people may agree

THE ANGER IN QUESTION IS **NOT A MATTER OF PRIVATE SEETHING**, NOR IS IT FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON AN OPPONENT. **IT IS INTENDED FOR DISPLAY.**

ogist, Paul DiMaggio, who has found that the range of opinions among Americans divided by race, age, sex, education, religion, and region has been steadily diminishing.

Tierney asks, “Why, if the public is tolerant, would the political elites be so angry?” He offers five reasons: “the decline of party bosses” who could promote centrist candidates; the rise of special-interest groups focused on ideologies; lobbies that can use defeats as a way of spurring donations; media professionals who use anger to entertain audiences; and gerrymandering, which protects incumbents in general elections but forces them “to appeal to the partisan voters who dominate primaries.”

A certain amount of self-contradiction slips in. If majorities have reached consensus on the contentious issues,

that abortion should be legal, one believing in an unconditional “right to choose,” the other favoring laws on parental consent. Often what appears as broad agreement masks important splits in premises and logic.

And the “war” is really about these premises and logic. America is divided not by the percentage of people on one side or another of a pollster’s question but by two incompatible views of the world. One emphasizes injustices in American history and continuing oppression; the other celebrates freedom and accomplishment. Those who focus on a history of injustice tend to look with pleasure on the crumbling of traditional culture. Those who celebrate freedom tend to look on the last 40 years as a period of sharp decline. One side champions the expansion of state-spon-

sored “rights”; the other champions individual responsibility. One side tends to view the family as an obstacle to personal liberation; the other views the family as the key social institution. Within these two frameworks, people disagree about many specific issues. Occasionally people on opposite sides of the division find common ground. But the division is nothing trivial: it guides emotional attachments and lifestyles, as well as political attitudes.

Most people understand that to get along with each other they need to find opaque ways to phrase certain issues that would otherwise embroil neighbors in constant acrimony. We don’t tear at each other day in and day out on immigration, the environment, school choice, and health-care reform. Usually we offer bland bromides instead of jalapeno harangues. But let someone raise one of these issues in a bar or in an Internet discussion, and the truce is over. These issues truly do divide the nation into complex and sometimes fiercely opposed communities of opinion.

But polarization and anger are not the same thing. The elites are indeed polarized from each other as well as angry. And we can have anger without polarity and polarity without anger. The North Pole is not usually thought of as angry with its Antarctic counterpart, and people disagree about many things without getting angry. Indeed, anger sometimes blooms more furiously when people agree about a great deal but unexpectedly find themselves in opposition on some relatively minor point. The New Anger does have roots in the cultural polarization of the last half-century. But it has gone on to a life of its own, and some of the performances of extreme rage are more about the hyperinflation in emotional currency than the polarization of politics.

Tierney’s article, of course, did not end the argument over whether the Left

was acting exceptionally angry or simply expressing justified indignation. As the Democratic National Convention approached, conservatives stepped up their commentary. Michael Novak observed:

In the past, liberals made a point of hating hatred. They imagined that the forces of hate were entirely on the other side: ‘Right-wing hate merchants.’ Now they have begun publicly to glory in hate, first writing articles explaining why hatred of Bush is okay, then being pleased by the ferocity of their own hatred, then competing with others to see who can voice the most intense disdain, and who can curl from his lips the most deliciously forbidden insults.

Novak explained this in pure culture-war terms: the Left hates Bush because he stands for those aspects of America that the Left despises, including “innocence” and “boyishness.” The Left also sees Bush as the embodiment of qualities it associates with the Right: “mean, narrow, selfish, evil.”

The Democrats kept up their diatribes, and the leftists continued to feel good about their anger. But the tactical decision to exclude such anger from emphatic display at the convention acknowledged that Democrats were in danger of having no real message other than “I hate President George W. Bush.” New Anger, for all its determination to perform for a public audience, turns out to have very little to say.

The week after the convention, Gary Alan Fine, a sociology professor at Northwestern University, published an article in the *Washington Post* ruminating on Bush-hatred. Fine said he realized the depth of hostility when a “distinguished social scientist” (he doesn’t name her) “without preface or embarrassment” declared that she “hated”

Bush. Fine remonstrated: surely she meant that she disagreed with Bush’s policies or was “vexed by the outcome of the 2000 election.” No, she “hated” Bush. “She felt nauseated and angry when she watched him. She was not just intellectually offended but morally so.”

Fine ventures an intriguing but incomplete explanation. He suggests that “presidential hatred” develops from “images of the president as a young adult,” which capture “critical cultural divisions that were never fully healed.” Nixon was hated for his role in McCarthyism; Clinton was hated for his hippie past; Bush is hated as a rich, feckless boy who succeeded in life despite his manifest failures.

We do indeed think of our presidents not just in light of their actions in office. Their life stories take on cultural significance. But while Fine’s observations pry open some of the cultural discontents that live inside Bush-hatred, they do not explain the license that a distinguished social scientist felt to allow her distastes to fester into “hatred” or the legitimacy she felt in expressing that hatred. Her ease about “hating”—and satisfaction in harboring it and telling others—is new. The old practice of seizing the biographies of presidents either to praise or denigrate them has been marshaled into the culture wars and armed with the weaponry of existential fury. For the first time in our political history, declaring absolute hatred for one’s opponent has become a sign not of sad excess but of good character.

Which, Republicans under Clinton or Democrats under Bush, suffered more grievously at the insolence of the other or responded more petulantly? I doubt that any objective standard could be found to evaluate such rock fights. In both cases, older ideals of circumspection and restraint collapsed. As Wolfe rightly points out, decorum in American politics was a weak reed to begin with:

we have long had the habit of speaking harshly about each other's failings and have often descended into personal attacks. But the eruptions of anger against Clinton and Bush took us beyond vituperation to a kind of anger that luxuriated in its own vehemence. Anger always has content as well as style, but New Anger elevates style to a new prominence. Being angry with New Anger is as much about declaring one's identity as it is about taking umbrage at someone else's infraction.

This is not, of course, exclusively a Democratic disease. It is bipartisan in its epidemiology, but naturally more salient in whatever party is currently out of power. New Anger does, however, have deeper roots on the Left. We can trace it back at least to the 1968 Democratic National Convention. On the Right, it seems to have emerged into mainstream prominence only during the Clinton years. The angry Right of previous decades—the John Birch Society and kindred anti-Communist and anti-civil-rights organizations—was politically marginal and focused much more on advancing an ideology. New Anger shifts the emphasis to public projection of one's feelings in a manner that may wrap in some political ideals but that nonetheless makes the matter personal.

Anger against Clinton was rarely and only superficially directed at his policies, although these could be swept into an indictment of his lack of principles. Conservatives saw Clinton as a man seducing the country into a cheaper version of itself—and succeeding. They saw the leaders of elite institutions shrugging off or temporizing with Clinton's personal corruption and feared this meant that older traditions of moral probity had lost their grip on America.

Bush stands for millions of Democrats as an embodiment of the callow and ignorant side of American life, a man moved by the pursuit of money and

cronyism and contemptuous of social justice, international law, and other enlightened ideals. Democrats see Bush as tricking the country into becoming a meaner version of itself—and using the war on terror to make that change permanent. They fear that he is displacing the people who by virtue of education and commitment to liberal ideals ought to be guiding America's institutions.

These really are polarized views. Each offers a moral picture of the United States as corrupted at the very top. And each invites us to participate as an agent of moral cleansing by joining in a wrathful purging of political opposition. Neither view invites us to consider the advantages of compromise, negotiation, patience, or temperance.

If, in your anger, you reduce your opponent to the status of someone unworthy or unable to engage in legitimate exchange, real politics comes to an end. That is the danger we face if we allow New Anger to continue to flourish in our political life. We have now discovered what it is like to be so angry—or self-righteous or condescending—that we hear only our own ravishing anger song. Anger may sharpen the senses in some contexts, but New Anger leads to a kind of cultural obliviousness that cannot be good for a democratic society.

During the confirmation hearings for Supreme Court nominee Samuel Alito, *Slate's* Dahlia Lithwick warned that Democrats err in supposing that judges who espouse the conservative judicial philosophy are “teeming with hate and rage.” Thinking so, she said,

... leads you Senate Democrats to believe that if you can just ask the right question of a federalist, he will erupt into a hissing, spitting parody of Bill O'Reilly and then try to strangle you with his bow tie on C-SPAN. As you observe the federalists here today, you will learn that

they love their families and do not devote their careers to systematically holding back women, persecuting minorities, and stealing wheelchairs from the disabled.

The self-defeating behavior of the Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee, however, is only one small instance of how New Anger stymies those who might, with less anger and more careful attention to actual circumstances, persuade others of the merits of their views. New Anger has eroded our collective capacity to advance worthy political aspirations. This is true for conservatives as well as liberals. Whoever embraces it is bound to find that, at least in the political realm, he has traded the possibility of real influence for the momentary satisfactions of self-expression.

Americans are faced with plenty of issues in which a certain amount of good old-fashioned anger might be appropriate, but this is not about advancing my own view of substantive national priorities. Rather, I am concerned that we have, with no real forethought, drifted into a style of political engagement that is very unlikely to prove constructive.

We are divided from one another into more interest groups, factions, and subcultures than Madison could ever have imagined. If we allow New Anger to become the common mode of self-expression in politics, can we hold this enterprise together? Or do we sink into a vast and noisy quarrel in which everyone is so eager to express his personal grievance that we are no longer able to hear ourselves? ■

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The Failure of Fusionism

Libertarians are growing uneasy about their alliance with the Right, but that doesn't necessarily make the Left a natural fit.

By Daniel McCarthy

JUST TWO YEARS AGO, conservatives were in a triumphalist mood. George W. Bush's supporters trumpeted him as the man who had won more popular votes for president than anyone else in the history of the Republic. With Republicans also adding to their majorities in both houses of Congress, America seemed to have become, as *The Economist's* Adrian Wooldridge and John Micklethwait dubbed her in the title of their 2004 book, *The Right Nation*.

No one would have anticipated that in January 2007 a cover story in *Commentary* would be asking, "Is Conservatism Finished?" There were conservative pessimists—especially among the few anti-Bush dissidents—in early 2005, but they were not to be found at *Commentary*, nor at *National Review*, which has also lately had to confront the question. Both magazines, in fact, still insist that their brand of conservatism is viable, the outcome of the 2006 midterm elections notwithstanding. But the headlines tell a different story.

One sign that all is not well with mainstream conservatism, philosophically no less than politically, lies in the growing dissension among libertarians and fiscal conservatives. Former Reagan Treasury official Bruce Bartlett last year dubbed Bush, in the title of his book, an impostor who had betrayed the Reagan legacy. In Ryan Sager's *The Elephant in the Room*, which explores recent tensions between the Republican Party's Religious Right and libertarian factions, readers were treated to Dick Armey denouncing Focus on the Family's

James Dobson. "Dobson and his gang of thieves are real nasty bullies," the former House majority leader said. Seeing the disarray on the Right, last June liberal blogger Markos Moulitsas ventured that libertarians ought to ditch the Right and build bridges to the Left, a topic he revisited in October in the Cato Institute's web journal. By the end of the year, Cato's director of research, Brink Lindsey, was making a case to readers of *The New Republic* for a "new 'fusionist' alliance of liberals and libertarians"—what he calls "libertarianism."

The immediate electoral implications of libertarians bolting from the Right are not likely to spell catastrophe for Republicans. Relying on a variety of polls and using a very loose definition of libertarian, Cato analysts David Boaz and David Kirby estimate that libertarians comprise 13 percent of the American electorate. That sounds like a prize worth fighting for, but as *The New Republic's* Jonathan Chait points out, Boaz and Kirby's own figures reveal that courting libertarians may cost candidates greater numbers of non-libertarian voters. By Boaz and Kirby's calculations "President Bush's share of the libertarian vote dropped precipitously between 2000 and 2004," Chait writes, "But, during that time, Bush's total share of the vote rose by almost 3 percent. So, however many voters were turned off by the prescription-drug bill or the Patriot Act, many more were turned on."

The long-term picture may look different, since an American Right shorn of its

libertarian components would be a thing fundamentally unlike the conservatism of the last half-century. Philosophical realignments don't change partisan politics overnight—but over time they can shift the tectonics of national life. The modern conservatism that arose in the 1950s provides a case in point: it took years to seize control of the Republican Party and nominate one of its heroes—Barry Goldwater—as the party's candidate for president, and it took decades to break the Democrats' hold on the South, elect a president, and win control Congress. In the 1950s, conservatives were every bit as marginal as libertarians and others on the dissident Right are now.

Strained relations between libertarians and others on the Right go back almost to the beginning. The earliest modern conservatives were the staunch opponents of the New Deal in the 1930s and ever after, an "Old Right" consisting largely of businessmen and philosophical libertarians of various kinds. They were joined in opposition to Left liberalism in the late 1940s and early 1950s by a group then called the "New Conservatives"—"new" precisely in that they were not the pro-business or laissez-faire types of the previous generation. These New Conservatives, including Russell Kirk, Peter Viereck, and Clinton Rossiter, were often trenchantly critical of business interests and "Manchester liberals" on the Right.

Rising to the New Conservatives' challenge was a contributor to the early *National Review*, an ex-Communist

who would become the magazine's literary editor: Frank S. Meyer. While Meyer was willing to deploy the same rhetorical intensity used by the New Conservatives against them—"Collectivism Rebaptized" was the title of one fusillade aimed in their direction—he also sought to develop a credo that could unite the Right. The result was called "fusionism" by its critics, but the term misleads since Meyer's concessions to the New Conservatives were mostly rhetorical. The substance of the doctrine amounted to libertarianism in domestic policy and hard-line anti-Communism in world affairs, including a commitment to American military power that many older libertarians found unpalatable. Fusionism proved a good match for the Goldwater movement and the burgeoning Young Americans for Freedom.

Fusionism also provided conservatives with a lowest common denominator at the time when the Right was first building an institutional movement through organs like *National Review*, YAF, and the American Conservative Union (of which Meyer was treasurer from 1965 to 1966). But fusionism had its enemies: it never satisfied either the staunch traditionalists, as the New Conservatives and their successors came to be known, or those radical libertarians who rejected the Cold War and the attendant loss of American liberties it entailed. Meyer's doctrine would run into other difficulties as well. Its author died in 1972, before the advent of anti-abortion social conservatism and the rise of the Religious Right, developments that would change the way many conservatives viewed domestic government power and make fusionism much less plausible.

Even before *Roe*, the fusionist consensus had fractured over the Vietnam War. There is something unreal today about libertarians and libertarian-con-

servatives like Brink Lindsey and Ryan Sager criticizing latter-day conservatism without emphasizing libertarian opposition to the Iraq War, since it was the Vietnam War that first led libertarians to break *en masse* from the conservative Right. But Sager and Lindsey both supported the invasion, which Lindsey only now concedes was "atrociously bungled." By downplaying foreign policy, the Cato scholar obscures some important historical parallels, for the Vietnam era also saw attempts by libertarians and liberals to find common ground, chiefly on the basis of opposition to the conflict. Those efforts proved essentially fruitless, though by defining themselves against the Right, libertarians set off on the path toward building their own institutions in the 1970s, including the Libertarian Party and Lindsey's employer, the Cato Institute.

The new libertarian movement rather quickly, however, fell back into the orbit of conservatism, especially once Cato relocated from California to Washington, D.C. The more that Cato focused on policy, rather than philosophy and radical libertarian theory (as it had in its early days, when Murray Rothbard was its head of research), the greater the mutual attraction between Cato and the conservative mainstream became.

On economic and regulatory questions—Cato's bread and butter—libertarians plainly remained much closer to the Right than to the Left. The Libertarian Party made a bid for centrist and liberal support in 1980, when its presidential candidate, Ed Clark, described his philosophy to Ted Koppel on "Nightline" as "low-tax liberalism." In 1988, however, a once and future Republican Congressman, Ron Paul, perched atop the LP ticket as the party's presidential nominee.

The trial separation from the Right did not end in divorce—and it's not likely to do so on the strength of Brink Lindsey's "libertarianism," which amounts to

something less than low-tax liberalism. Indeed, Lindsey is open to raising certain taxes. "Go ahead, tax the rich," he says, "but don't do it when they're being productive." That might sound good to liberals, but what appeal does it hold for libertarians? And Lindsey's ideas get worse: he would cap home mortgage interest deductions and raise taxes on energy—including universally hated gasoline taxes. Not only does that not sound consonant with libertarian principles, but it's hard to imagine that economic program paired with a libertarian-liberal social agenda—gas taxes and gay marriage—as a winning political platform.

Libertarians won't go wild for many of Lindsey's other ideas either, such as his support for unemployment and even wage insurance. In fact, his litany of Republican defects, "ranging from runaway federal deficit spending at a clip unmatched since Lyndon Johnson" to "extremist measures of executive power under cover of fighting terrorism" is the only part of his *New Republic* essay that is at all persuasive. What are opponents of such measures to do if not make common cause with the Left?

The political scene today is reminiscent not only of the Vietnam era but also of the early 1990s. Then too there was an unpopular president named Bush, aided and abetted by Dick Cheney—and then too American troops were deployed in the Middle East, Congressional Republicans were demoralized, and there was much talk of a "conservative crack-up." (R. Emmett Tyrrell even published a book by that name in 1992.) But at that time, rather than looking Left, some notable libertarians began looking further to the Right.

In particular, the radical libertarian economist Murray Rothbard, who had tried to build a principled antiwar alliance with the Left in the Vietnam years, looked toward Pat Buchanan and paleoconservative thinkers associated

with *Chronicles* magazine. Rothbard and his friends, including Ludwig von Mises Institute President Lew Rockwell, were not intent on dusting off the old fusionism of Frank Meyer. For one thing, this new libertarian-conservative alliance would be cemented by opposition to, rather than support for, U.S. intervention abroad. An emphasis on federalism and decentralization—and an agreement to disagree—would characterize the project's domestic views. As *Chronicles* editor Thomas Fleming later recalled, "We struck a bargain from the beginning: Although I believe that the commonwealth is a natural and necessary part of human social life, I nevertheless agreed with Murray that 90 percent of what modern states do is evil and destructive. 'When we get to the last ten percent,' I said, 'it will be time for us to quarrel.'" In the meantime, there were surprising areas of common ground on

enemy. Rothbard did not accept a "four-way matrix" of American politics, of the sort cited by David Boaz and David Kirby in their recent analysis of the libertarian vote, that cast libertarians and populists as diametric opposites, with libertarians being socially liberal and economically conservative and populists the reverse. Rothbard believed that libertarians ought to be populists—culturally if not economically—and that they potentially had much in common with the people described by paleoconservative theorist Sam Francis as "middle-American radicals."

The anti-establishment and anti-government mood on the Right in the 1992 and 1994 election seasons seemed to bear out the theoretical possibilities of the paleo alliance. As Lew Rockwell later noted, "The 104th Congress [elected in 1994] put into power a group of freshmen legislators who won on platforms that looked like they were written by the

Rothbard died eight days after that piece was published, and the co-operation he had fostered between the Center for Libertarian Studies and the paleoconservative Rockford Institute came to an end the following year. The intellectual and institutional ferment he had brought about by bridging the paleo Right and radical libertarianism continued, however, both in the pages of *Chronicles*—which continued to feature libertarians like Bill Kauffman, Justin Raimondo, and Jesse Walker alongside paleoconservatives like John Lukacs, Thomas Fleming, and Sam Francis—and in new venues such as Raimondo's Antiwar.com. The Mises Institute has likewise continued its engagement with many paleoconservative scholars, including Paul Gottfried and Clyde Wilson.

The similarities between the political scenes of 1991 and today might seem to augur a revival of paleolibertarianism—at least, on the face of it, such a development doesn't seem any more implausible than a libertarian swing to the Left. While Brink Lindsey and Ryan Sager prefer to avoid harsh criticism of the Iraq War, libertarians who do put a high premium on an anti-interventionist foreign policy will find much to their liking on the paleo- and "post-paleo" Right. And although most libertarians continue to favor open borders—a symposium on the topic in the August/September 2006 issue of *Reason* featured no restrictionists and was titled "Immigration Now, Immigration Tomorrow, Immigration Forever"—recent issues of *Liberty* magazine show that among libertarians, too, resistance to mass illegal immigration is building. *Liberty's* October 2006 issue also carried a symposium on immigration, with editor Stephen Cox taking the side of restriction and senior editor Bruce Ramsey reluctantly supporting a "half-open door." Letters in the December issue commenting on the symposium showed strong reader-support for Cox's position—and also, less

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immigration and trade, for Rothbard came to believe mass immigration was doing more harm than good for the cause of liberty, and he saw NAFTA as—in the words of Rothbard biographer Justin Raimondo—"mercantilism, pure and simple, a regional trade bloc whose economic practices are no freer than that of the European Community."

As important as specific areas of agreement, however, was the character of the "paleo" synthesis as a coalition of the periphery against the center—of Auburn, Ala. (home of the Ludwig von Mises Institute) and Rockford, Ill., against Washington, D.C. and New York City. The political and media mainstream, whether conservative, liberal, or libertarian, was the

Old Right. They were skeptical of war, opposed to taxes, bitter about regulations, and not very friendly to imperial, trade-diverting treaties like Nafta and Gatt." Rothbard anticipated betrayal by the Republican Congressional leadership, however. In a Dec. 30, 1994 op-ed in the *Washington Post* titled "Newt Gingrich Is No Libertarian," Rothbard argued that in contrast to the "Gingrich-Dole-Army Republican elites" grassroots Americans "couldn't care less about Bosnia or Somalia or Haiti; they resist government-made multinational trade cartels, and they oppose foreign aid. Yet the Republican 'conservatives' are at least as enthusiastic as Democratic liberals about these programs."

surprisingly, strong criticism. (The same issue also contains an essay by Bruce Ramsey, "What Conservatives Are Good For," arguing that libertarians should continue to work with conservatives, especially on the state level.) The *Liberty* symposium, and reader reaction to it, shows that the immigration is not nearly so settled an issue for libertarians as the movement's loudest voices might wish.

More plausible than either liberalitarianism or a revival of 1990s-style paleo-libertarianism, however, is a gradual reconfiguration of conservatism, liberalism, and libertarianism alike under the pressures of the War on Terror. Lindsey may have been more right than he realized when he wrote, "the real problem with our politics today is that the prevailing ideological categories are intellectually exhausted"; it may already be anachronistic to talk about libertarians aligning with the Left or the Right, when different factions of Left and Right are even beginning to align with one another, not in some grand theoretical project but in support of or opposition to the extreme measures that have so far characterized the War on Terror.

The highly unusual mixture of support for Sen. Jim Webb found among antiwar conservatives, conventional liberals, economic populists, and libertarians suggests what may be in the offing. If Left and Right really are outmoded terms, libertarians—and others who are beginning to peel away from the conservative establishment—should not wonder which side to choose. They should simply stay true to their philosophy and oppose government aggrandizement as effectively as they can—which, contra Lindsey, does not mean embracing energy taxes or forgetting that war is the health of the state. ■

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Demon Fries

New York City finds a new menace—at McDonald's.

By Michael Brendan Dougherty

EXACTLY 73 YEARS after the end of Prohibition, New York City's Board of Health announced its restrictions on the use of artificial trans fats in restaurants to be phased in over the next 18 months. The official announcement of a "healthier" New York touted the city's first-in-the-nation status. Boston and Chicago are already considering similar bans. Starbucks, reading the signs of the times, began to phase out the naughty grease from their brownies and muffins with the goal of being trans-fat free by 2008.

Civil libertarians smell a trend. Just as the smoking ban in bars has spread from one city to another, forcing smokers onto the street, so it seems that trans fats will be gradually confined to the home kitchen—and perhaps banished altogether.

Trans fat is made by adding hydrogen to vegetable oil. When Crisco developed its partially hydrogenated oil shortening products in 1911, its ingenious marketing ploy of including free cookbooks with its product helped to usher trans fats into the American diet. The partially hydrogenated oils gave baked goods a longer shelf-life than products made with saturated fats.

Ironically, health concerns helped drive up the use of hydrogenated oil products in the restaurant industry. In 1984, the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) campaigned for the use of partially hydrogenated oils in fast-food chains as an alternative to saturated fats when high cholesterol was the greatest cause for concern in health

circles. Beef tallow and other saturated fats thus disappeared from the industry. But by 1992, after weighing the importance of new studies on trans fats, the CSPI began to inveigh against partially hydrogenated oils.

Broad public concern about trans fats did not materialize until 2003 when the Food and Drug Administration mandated that all companies include the grams per serving of trans fat in their nutritional labeling by 2006. Also, BanTransFats.com, Inc. launched a well publicized suit against Kraft Foods aimed at removing trans fats from Oreo cookies. When Kraft agreed to comply, the suit was dropped. The market reacted quickly. Editors of health and beauty magazines had a new culprit to warn the body-conscious about and plenty of new studies denouncing trans fat at their disposal. Zero trans fat labels began appearing on processed and canned food everywhere, and even on foods that were obviously trans-fat free.

Before issuing the ban, the New York City Health Board found that nearly half of the city's restaurants use trans fats and that nearly one-third of New Yorkers' caloric intake comes from eating out on the town. Before restrictions were considered, the board, in an unconscious imitation of the temperance movement, embarked on a campaign of uplift and preaching. Pamphlets were distributed with the ominous equation: Partially Hydrogenated Oils = Trans fat = Heart Disease. Buyer beware! Restaurant owners were urged to give up the stuff voluntar-

ily. By the middle of 2006, the Board found that its campaign had failed entirely. There was no appreciable drop in the number of restaurants using partially hydrogenated oils.

Other considerations had to be taken into account, so the Board rounded up public comments. Acknowledging New York's religious and ethnic diversity, the Health Board sought the counsel of kosher bakeries to ensure that dairy-free products could be made without trans fats. Fast-food restaurants complained the most. But after the Board of Health tallied the comments, they found only 74 of 2,287 respondents opposed the restrictions on trans fats. The anti-ban column featured Domino's Pizza, Wendy's, Applebee's, and Burger King. In the pro-ban column were several New York hospitals and Harvard University, and groups like the American Diabetes Association and the National Hispanic Medical Association.

WITH THREATS OF A MERE \$200 FINE PER VIOLATION, THESE COLORFUL HOLES IN THE WALL WILL LIKELY CONTINUE TO IGNORE THE WISHES OF THE NATIONAL HISPANIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

The ban does not affect New York's social classes in equal measure. Manhattan tourist traps like the Magnolia Bakery, equally famous for its mentions on "Sex and the City" as for its buttercream cupcakes, has never used partially hydrogenated oils in its baking. Why would they? Crisco is for use in suburban homes and hole-in-the-wall restaurants. Similarly, higher-end establishments like Po on Cornelia Street in Greenwich Village use "olive oil, butter or nothing," according to manager Jonathan Casteel.

Overwhelmingly, the ban affects fast-food chains and smaller enterprises, like bakeries and ethnic restaurants in

the outer boroughs. This presents a unique enforcement situation. Asian buffets in Astoria have health-board thermometers put into their dishes only once a year, and despite 364 days of lukewarm food under fading heat lamps, they remain cheap, open, and frequented. With threats of a mere \$200 fine per violation, these colorful holes in the wall will likely continue to ignore the wishes of the National Hispanic Medical Association and Harvard University if it suits them.

Walt Riker, a spokesman for McDonald's, says that the Golden Arches will be ready to comply with New York's regulations when they go into effect, noting the company's "aggressive test program for alternative oils" that has been running since 2002. An employee who wished to remain anonymous at the McDonald's near Fordham University in the Bronx seemed distraught at the news. "I just hope corporate tells us

what's up. ... The city can't just change our fries like that. People love them things." He's right. They do.

The challenges for fast-food chains are particularly tough as their food is mass-produced. According to Riker, not only must customers be unable to tell the difference in taste, but the replacement oil also must not present any new "technical issues." Fast-food chains have tens of millions of dollars invested in infrastructure built to keep their cooking oils at certain temperatures, and their cost calculations take into account the "fry life" of oil and how each oil reacts with each food and temperature differently.

McDonald's can hardly sacrifice the hash brown to save the french fry. Food industries fear that the cycle will continue. After transitioning from saturated fats to hydrogenated oils in the 1980s, fast-food chains—which remain popular because of their food's taste, convenience, and low price—will again have to spend millions in search of another cure for another health panic.

The logic of the restrictions appears persuasive. Since some of the costs of medical treatment are socialized, it is in the public interest for people to be healthy. Why not save some of the poor souls who can only afford cheeseburgers from McDonald's dollar menu? But even if the ban is successful in lowering the number of people who die from heart disease in New York, it will likely not reduce expenditures on health care. As University of Chicago law professor Richard Posner points out, "Diseases in effect compete with each other; if a person is saved from one disease, this increases the 'market' for another disease." This means more studies, more health scares, more exhortations from medical school faculty for action, and more regulation. It also means less personal responsibility for consumers.

An era of culinary history is ending. A series of health scares and the demands to drive down cost in an industrializing food industry made hydrogenated oils ubiquitous in our food culture. Now a series of health scares and the prospect of heart disease and obesity driving up the cost of the nation's health care will see them dumped from their fry bins forever.

Back in the Bronx, gazing into the oil bubbling through a fresh basket of fries, the chatty McDonald's employee asks, "You think billions of customers don't know what they get? They do. Now do you want some of these fries, or what?" ■

Leftward Christian Soldiers

With a new generation of leaders preaching social justice over cultural concerns, the Religious Right may not remain an automatic Republican constituency.

By Darryl Hart

WITH WOUNDS STILL FRESH from the midterm elections, conservative supporters of the Republican Party now have to endure the salt of electoral analysis. One theory has it that the GOP lost because it went too far in accommodating the Religious Right. In fact, in analysis written well before the elections, pundits complained about the evangelical takeover of the Republican Party. Andrew Sullivan in his book, *The Conservative Soul: How We Lost It, How to Get it Back*, argues that someone like John McCain is incapable of receiving the Republican nomination for president in 2008 because the Religious Right dominates the party's infrastructure. So too in his recent book, *American Theocracy*, Kevin Phillips alleges that evangelical Protestantism increasingly defines the GOP coalition and its constituents.

But the rush to blame Republicans for playing with spiritual fire actually misses a much more compelling story: the growing erosion of evangelical support for the GOP. If current trends continue, baby boomer evangelicals may be the first generation of white Protestants in U.S. history to abandon the Republican Party. In the 2004 election, 78 percent of evangelical Christians voted for George W. Bush, and just 22 percent voted for Kerry. In the recent midterm elections, 28 percent voted for Democrats—not a huge gain, though with 40 percent claiming to be dissatisfied with the direction of the country, they should scarcely be considered an automatic constituency.

The typical way of explaining evangelical support for the GOP is by following the trail of right-wing Protestant ideologies spawned by the fundamentalist controversy of the 1920s and hostility to the New Deal prior to World War II. The old Christian Right included such hardliners as Gerald Winrod, who in 1938 ran for the Senate in the Kansas Republican primaries and Carl McIntire, the notorious Presbyterian fundamentalist radio personality. Their outspoken opposition to the culture of vice associated with alcohol, the teaching of evolution in public schools, and later their fierce hostility to Communism defined fundamentalist Protestant politics. A large helping of teaching about the end of human history added to the apparent harshness of the old Christian Right's politics and gave evangelicals the boldness to read domestic affairs and international relations as signposts on the road to Christ's return.

What energized the Religious Right of the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, owed less to a belief in a cosmic contest between the forces of good and evil than to the older Anglo-American outlook that associated the faith of God-fearing American Protestants with the health of a free and virtuous society. Even though white Protestants were divided after the 1920s along conservative and liberal theological lines, both sides of the evangelical-mainline division preferred an American society dominated by WASP culture.

Before 1970, thanks to the efforts of traditional Protestants, the United

States was a generally family-friendly place. Schools included prayer and Bible reading, abortion was illegal, federal officials were not threatening to bus children to a school in another neighborhood, and domesticity was still the ideal for women. All in all, the so-called Protestant establishment, although theologically suspect from an evangelical perspective, maintained exactly what would draw the Religious Right of Jerry Falwell and company into the arena of national politics—standards of public decency and a nation that needed a religious foundation for its domestic and foreign affairs.

Mark A. Noll's summary of Protestant political convictions in the Progressive era explains just how much the political agenda of the post-1970 Religious Right meshed with that of the so-called liberal Protestant establishment. The University of Notre Dame historian writes:

Protestants in the progressive era relied instinctively on the Bible to provide their ideals of justice. ... They were reformists at home and missionaries abroad who felt that cooperation among Protestants signaled the advance of civilization. ... [T]hey continued to suspect Catholics as being anti-American, they promoted the public schools as agents of a broad form of Christianization, and they were overwhelmingly united behind prohibition as the key step toward a renewed society.

Obviously, some of these concerns needed to be adjusted within the coalition of conservatives that Ronald Reagan patched together. The Religious Right never seriously entertained prohibition as a policy, though it did find an outlet for virtue politics in the war on drugs. In addition, the Religious Right engineered a variety of ways to educate its children—either through Christian day schools or homeschooling—to compensate for the Supreme Court's rulings that stripped prayer and Bible reading from public schools. Furthermore, the Religious Right reconsidered its hostility to Roman Catholics once the latter, led by a pope who helped to defeat Communism and defended the culture of life, appeared to be equally concerned about preserving a Christian America.

Even so, the political instincts of the Religious Right bear remarkable similarity to those of the old Protestant Establishment. In fact, as Noll has also shown implicitly in his magisterial book, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*, the Religious Right is indebted to the Christian republicanism of the Founding Fathers that assumed liberal democracy could only exist if the people are virtuous and that the only source for civic virtue is true religion. White American Protestants have never really questioned this understanding of national purpose.

Of course, the Religious Right was not simply a repeat of the enlightened Protestantism that informed the American founding. After World War II, evangelicals also supported free markets, limited government, and strong national defense. As the University of Wisconsin political scientist Robert Booth Fowler points out, born-again Protestant leaders like Carl F.H. Henry and Billy Graham defended free markets and balanced budgets and opposed Communism along with domestic policies that might increase the size of America's fed-

eral government. Evangelicals' defense of freedom was so strong that they regarded labor unions as antithetical to the culture of enterprise that made America great. Even so, evangelicals were cautious about America's prospects. They feared the effects of secularization and warned that materialism and hedonism threatened America's God-blessed status. Post-World War II evangelicals were also suspicious of the kind of social engineering implied by the welfare state.

But for baby-boomer evangelicals, the ideology of free markets, small government, and civic virtue has become stale and predictable. Evangelical irritation with the politics of the GOP's Greatest Generation can even turn vehement as it did recently with Randall Balmer's book, *The Kingdom Come: How the Religious Right Distorts the Faith and Threatens America*. According to the Barnard College religious studies professor, the purpose of the Religious Right's grasping for power amounts to "an expansion of tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans,

bad. He writes sarcastically that he must have been absent from Sunday school the day the lesson included Jesus' teachings about securing "greater economic advantages for the affluent," depriving the poor "of a living wage," and despoiling the environment by "sacrificing it on the altar of free enterprise."

Balmer's liberal self-righteousness did not emerge in a vacuum. As early as 1973, a group of young evangelicals drafted a little publicized statement entitled "The Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern." In the wake of campus unrest, rioting in America's cities, and disgust with the war in Vietnam, the younger academics who signed the declaration appealed to the general ideal of "social righteousness." The prescriptions were slim in a statement of less than 500 words. In fact, the Chicago Declaration's purpose appeared to be more an effort to confess evangelical complicity in America's sins than a proposal for solving the predicaments America faced. The best the drafters of the declaration could do was insist that

BORN-AGAIN PROTESTANT LEADERS LIKE BILLY GRAHAM DEFENDED FREE MARKETS AND BALANCED BUDGETS AND OPPOSED COMMUNISM ALONG WITH DOMESTIC POLICIES THAT MIGHT INCREASE THE SIZE OF AMERICA'S FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

the continued prosecution of a war in the Middle East that enraged our long-time allies and would not meet even the barest of just-war criteria, and a rejiggering of Social Security, the effect of which, most observers agree, would be to fray the social-safety net for the poorest among us." He argues that the Religious Right also threatens American public schools by seeking to replace "science curricula with theology, thereby transforming students into catechumens." For Balmer, the Religious Right's distortion of the gospel is just as

God requires social justice from nations that claim to be righteous. This involved defending the social and economic rights of the poor and oppressed, deploring "the historic involvement of the church in America with racism," and condemning "the exploitation of racism at home and abroad by our economic system." For Calvin College historian, Joel A. Carpenter, the Chicago Declaration signaled a "radical shift" within the evangelical movement because it altered the insistence that churches should avoid meddling in pol-

itics by countering with social justice as “one of the central callings of all Christians.”

Jim Wallis, the founding editor of *Sojourners* magazine, made a career out of the themes articulated in the Chicago Declaration. A graduate of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in the suburbs of Chicago, Wallis challenged the bourgeois sensibilities of born-again Protestants both in his writings and by forming a kind of Christian commune in inner-city Washington, D.C. Wallis’s aim was to break down the walls that divided blacks and whites, poor and middle-class, cities and suburbs. For him it was insufficient simply to provide for the poor and hungry. Evangelicals also

tive” on the family, sexual integrity and personal responsibility, and “progressive, populist, or even radical” on race, poverty, and war.

As much as mainstream media tend to portray the evangelical Left as a minority position among a largely red-state constituency, the sentiments of the Chicago Declaration and the arguments of Wallis have gained legitimacy within established evangelical institutions.

Wallis’s attempt to square the difference between the Left and the Right was exactly what the National Association of Evangelicals proposed in its 2005 statement, “For the Health of a Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility.” The NAE’s manifesto was longer than

gained notoriety with his book, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (1977). Like Wallis, Sider was convinced that middle-class Christians needed to change their patterns of conspicuous consumption and work for the reform of social structures that cause poverty. Equally important to Sider was the idea that fighting hunger and poverty was a duty the Bible demanded of all Christians. His influence on “For the Health of the Nation” was particularly evident in the section on poverty. Rather than viewing the poor through the lens of charity or welfare, the NAE statement treated it as a matter of economic justice. Accordingly, the statement called upon Christians to “shape wise laws pertaining to the creation of wealth, wages, education, taxation, immigration, health care, and social welfare that will protect those trapped in poverty and empower the poor to improve their circumstances.”

Not as official as the NAE statement but perhaps more influential is the recent activity of Rick Warren’s P.E.A.C.E. initiative. The Hawaiian-shirt wearing southern California Baptist pastor is the author of the best-selling *Purpose Driven Life* (2002). Rather than using his profits to buy more Tommy Bahama merchandise, Warren has admirably but also naïvely started a organization to “mobilize 1 billion Christians around the world into an outreach effort to attack the five global, evil giants of our day. . . spiritual emptiness, corrupt leadership, poverty, disease, and illiteracy.” According to Warren, no government “can effectively eradicate” these afflictions. That leaves the church to do it. Although Warren’s implicit distrust of the state suggests that the left-of-center humanitarianism of evangelicals could find an outlet other than big government, his assigning to the church tasks typically reserved for the modern state will

THANKS TO THE **INFLUENCE OF THE EVANGELICAL LEFT**, THREE NEW POLICY INITIATIVES MADE THE CUT: “**JUSTICE AND COMPASSION FOR THE POOR**,” ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, AND THE “**RESTRAINT OF VIOLENCE**.”

needed to identify with the poor because Jesus did. In his first book, *Agenda for a Biblical People* (1976), Wallis drew a line between those who were merely supporters of “establishment Christianity” and practitioners of biblical faith. More recently, Wallis has added vitriol against the Religious Right to his calls for social justice. In *Who Speaks for God?: An Alternative to the Religious Right* (1996), he argued, à la the Chicago Declaration, that evangelical Protestantism had been “hijacked” by political conservatives and reduced to an ideology, thereby silencing Scripture’s prophetic voice. In his most recent book, *God’s Politics: Why the Right Gets it Wrong and the Left Doesn’t Get It* (2005), Wallis presented what he understands as a biblical case for social justice as a third way between the Religious Right and the secular Left. Wallis’s triangulation involves being “conserva-

the 1973 Declaration because of the effort to propose specific policies. But the sentiments were similar and suggested that the evangelical soul had been captured by what was once a fringe expression of born-again discomfort with conservative politics. The specific policy initiatives included perennial Religious Right favorites such as religious liberty, families, the sanctity of human life, and human rights. But thanks to the influence of the evangelical Left, three new policy initiatives also made the cut: “justice and compassion for the poor,” environmental protection, and the “restraint of violence.”

One reason for the proposals had to be the influence of the evangelical activist, Ron Sider, who was part of the group that drafted the Chicago Declaration and also participated in writing “For the Health of a Nation.” An evangelical Anabaptist with pacifist leanings, Sider

likely have the effect of prompting American evangelicals to demand that the United States help the church in accomplishing these ends. In which case, the political convictions of limited government, free markets, and strong national defense will become even less meaningful to born-again Protestants enthralled by Warren's dog-good-purposes than they already are, especially if liberal politicians can begin to speak comfortably about faith.

The reasons for this generational shift among evangelicals are varied and complex. Certainly, much of the current discomfort with the Religious Right stems from opposition to the war in Iraq. Balmer's rhetoric is telling:

The torture of human beings, God's creatures—some guilty of crimes, others not—has been justified by the Bush administration, which also believes that it is perfectly acceptable to conduct surveillance on American citizens without putting itself to the trouble of obtaining a court order. Indeed, the chicanery, the bullying, and the flouting of the rule of law that emanates from the nation's capital these days make Richard Nixon look like a fraternity prankster.

For Balmer, putting up with his parents' support for Tricky Dick was bad enough. George W. Bush's presidency makes support for the Right unthinkable.

Related to this rejection of Bush is the flakiness that afflicts the generation spared the hardships and sacrifices demanded of their parents who endured the Great Depression and fought totalitarianism. Having grown up with little pride in America, its institutions, and political traditions, and finding it difficult to accept the realities that come with growing up, evangelical baby

boomers have no compass for discerning a way to stay on a politically sensible path while replacing their fathers' Oldsmobiles with their own Land Rovers.

But arguably the most important consideration for understanding boomer evangelicals' distaste for conservatism is the defeat of Communism. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union not only stood for an ideology at odds with America's unique blend of liberal democracy and Christianity. It also convinced born-again Protestants of the necessity and virtues of free institutions, market capitalism, and a strong military. Just as anti-Communism held together the post-World War II patchwork of libertarians and traditionalists, it also explained born-again Protestants' relatively easy absorption into the conservative movement. But with the destruction of the Berlin Wall, the barrier to sentiments like those of the Chicago Declaration also came down, and the generation of conservative Protestants led by such figures as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson is

giving way to the era of Jim Wallis, Rick Warren, and Ron Sider.

In the 1970s, concerns about declining standards of social morality and decency made evangelicals seem like a natural Republican constituency. But biblical standards of morality have a way of nurturing interest in biblical standards of social justice. Where the older generation of evangelicals reads the Bible for its application to sex and family relations, younger evangelicals are turning to holy writ for guidance on war, hunger, and poverty. These boomers' interpretations of Scripture can be questioned. But the irony remains that once the Religious Right let the genie of Bible-based politics out of the bottle of American conservatism, they may have unleashed a force that Republicans will find impossible to harness. ■

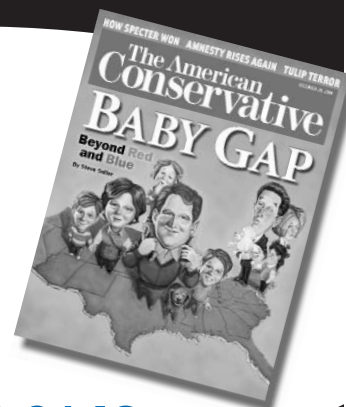
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Arts & Letters

FILM

[*Dreamgirls*]

Drama Queens & Showstoppers

By Steve Sailer

BROADWAY MUSICAL composers can't seem to come up with catchy tunes anymore, so Hollywood has turned to singers' biopics, such as recent Oscar-winners "Walk the Line" (Johnny Cash) and "Ray" (Ray Charles), so audiences can still leave the theater humming the hits.

Unfortunately, musical career arcs generally lack fresh drama. The genre's standard plot sees the struggling young prodigy get a quick lesson in how to sell a song from a veteran Svengali, after which he ascends to superstardom during a montage. In Act II, the singer struggles with his "inner demons," which predictably turn out to be drugs or drink.

It doesn't help that filmmakers have been oddly averse to honesty about why we idolize outstanding singers. "Walk the Line," for example, implied that Cash became a legend because of the emotional trauma of his younger brother's death. Likewise, when Hollywood finally makes "The Shaquille O'Neal Story," we'll no doubt learn Shaq grew up to be a 7'1" NBA center because his beloved pet dog got run over.

What made Cash unique, however, was that bass-baritone voice with which he would thrillingly rumble, "Hello, I'm Johnny Cash." Joaquin Phoenix, a fine actor but a mere baritone, couldn't match it.

In contrast, "Dreamgirls," the deservedly crowd-pleasing film version of the 1981 Broadway musical, demonstrates the storytelling advantages of making stuff up. A highly fictionalized account of Motown's Supremes (renamed the Dreams), it refreshingly puts conflicts over voices and looks at the center of this story of three Detroit high-school friends who become the biggest American pop group of the 1960s.

"Dreamgirls" adds operatic resonance to the real-life squabbles between Diana Ross and Florence Ballard over who would sing lead in the Supremes by assigning the Ballard character an Aretha Franklin-sized vocal talent, along with an Aretha-sized girth. To cross over to the white audience, however, the music mogul based on Motown's formidable Berry Gordy (Jamie Foxx of "Ray") promotes the thinner looking (and sounding) ingénue over the more authentically African-American powerhouse. (Ironically, the actual Diana was much darker than Flo, whose nickname was "Blondie.")

The film's producers made this Aretha conceit plausible by auditioning 783 singers before deciding upon Jennifer Hudson, a former "American Idol" contestant with overwhelming pipes and presence, whose rendition of "And I'm Telling You I'm Not Going" tops even Jennifer Holliday's storied 1981 version.

Beyoncé Knowles, former lead singer of Destiny's Child, the most successful girl group since the Supremes, is bland in the thankless Diana Ross-like role. Technically, she's the villainess, but her dialogue is too nice to make her a diva you love to hate. Beyoncé's best acting has come during the publicity tour as she throws heavily publicized snits worthy of Miss Ross over the accolades her co-star Hudson has been garnering.

While "Dreamgirls" appeals primarily to girls, it has enough male star

power that guys will find it a tolerable date movie. Eddie Murphy is entertaining as a bumptious soul singer modeled on Marvin Gaye and Jackie Wilson. Little-known Keith Robinson, whose biggest role had been the Green Power Ranger in that bizarre kids' TV series, is suave as the Smokey Robinson-style songwriter.

The 1981 musical was composed by Henry Krieger, written by Tom Eyen, and directed by Michael Bennett ("Chorus Line"), three homosexual white men. (The latter two died of AIDS.) Fortunately, the film adaptation's writer and director Bill Condon, author of the screenplay of 2002's "Chicago," resists the temptation that has overwhelmed the musical stage in recent decades to, as Mel Brooks observed in "The Producers," "Keep it mad / Keep it glad / Keep it gay!" Although another white gay, Condon respects the overwhelming heterosexuality of Motown too much to inject the usual self-absorbed homosexual themes that have transformed Broadway in the half century since its peak in the 1950s from American culture's Great White Way to our Slight Gay Way.

And Condon is surprisingly frank about the tragic social irony that, although Motown's music did much to make whites like blacks more, the Motor City itself began crumbling once blacks took control.

"Dreamgirls" is quite a success, but only within the limitations of the post-"Cabaret" era of musicals without great scores. This is an age of marvelous female singers such as Hudson but not of songwriters worthy of them. Even "And I'm Telling You" turns out to be more of a showcase for Holliday/Hudson than a melody you'll remember for long. ■

Rated PG-13 for language, some sexuality, and drug content.

BOOKS

[*The Solzhenitsyn Reader: New and Essential Writings 1947-2005*, edited by Edward E. Ericson Jr. and Daniel J. Mahoney, ISI Books, 634 pages]

Russian Giant

By Kevin Lynch

EVEN AS A YOUNG BOY, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn knew he wanted to be a writer and, as was perhaps fitting for any Russian born in 1918, the year after the Bolsheviks came to power, he wanted to use his pen to honor their revolution. By the age of 10, he was keeping a journal wherein he praised the revolution for, among other accomplishments, liquidating poverty. By 18, he was writing about the events leading to the Bolshevik Revolution, which he called the most earth-shaking event of modern world history—and he meant it admiringly. But then came World War II, military service, and an arrest for writing letters disparaging Stalin.

Sentenced to eight years in prison for his crime, Solzhenitsyn would later write gratefully of the sentence and of his experience in the Gulag, as we now know to call it, thanks largely to him. “I hate to think,” he says, “what sort of writer I would have become (for I would have gone on writing) if I had not been put inside.” *The Solzhenitsyn Reader* tells us what sort of writer he became. Unlike anyone before or after him, he ensured that the unimaginable horrors the Soviets inflicted on countless millions could now be imagined. But what a task he faced. The monster that was Soviet Communism endured so long and crushed so many lives in so many different ways. Doing justice to those lives meant telling many different stories.

Editors Edward E. Ericson and Daniel J. Mahoney, each of whom has written critically acclaimed books on

Solzhenitsyn, say their goal is to make the broad sweep of his work available to English-speaking readers. What a daunting task they faced. The man has written plays, poems, short stories, memoirs, novels, historical analyses and multivolume works that cannot quite be placed in any of the previous categories. More than a quarter of the material they selected has never before appeared in English.

I was, I should admit, at first doubtful that the drama and intensity of Solzhenitsyn's longer works would come across as powerfully in excerpted form, but I need not have worried. Whichever one you start with, whether it's *The First Circle*, *Cancer Ward*, *The Gulag Archipelago*, or *The Red Wheel*, you are immediately absorbed into Solzhenitsyn's world. In *First Circle* (newly translated and substantially different from the first English version published in the late 1960s, (which Solzhenitsyn “lightened” in an unsuccessful attempt to get by the censors), tension starts in the opening chapter as Innokentii Volodin, a Soviet diplomat in Moscow, debates whether to place a phone call to a Western embassy to warn that a Soviet spy in New York is about to pick up classified information on atomic technology. If he does as his conscience tells him, he knows it will

months, years of life could not compare with today, this one supreme day.”

While *First Circle* and *Cancer Ward* have found large audiences, it is *The Gulag Archipelago* that made Solzhenitsyn known to the world and rocked the Soviet Union to its foundation. Yet it is not something he wanted to write. Ericson and Mahoney tell us he wrote it out of a sense of obligation to the zek nation, the millions destroyed in the Gulag. Unusual for this kind of work, there are no easy divides, with the fully humans inside the barbed wire and the brutal subhumans on the other side. Early on, he warns the reader not to expect that: “If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?” Here, as in his other writings and in his speeches, the role of conscience is a recurring theme.

Inside the Gulag, the prisoner must decide whether he will survive “at any price,” that is, at the price of someone else. Though he acknowledges the majority of prisoners chose to survive at any price, he says many did not, and it

HE BIDS A WARM FAREWELL TO HIS HOME OF EIGHT YEARS: “BLESS YOU, PRISON, FOR HAVING BEEN IN MY LIFE!”

likely mean, at best, the Gulag. *Cancer Ward*, another novel, tells the stories of patients and doctors in a medical clinic far from Moscow. It is as haunting as any selection in the book, particularly the chapters devoted to Oleg Kostoglotov. Like Solzhenitsyn, Oleg was a soldier, was in the camps, and was treated for cancer. When his treatment is finished, the former soldier-prisoner-patient is finally released into the outside world. He has little money, his clothes are shabby, and no family awaits him anywhere, yet he is overjoyed by the sights and sounds of his first day in this new world: “Whole

was among these, the men of conscience, that he found his friends. When he is eventually freed from prison, he is an utterly changed man. The Gulag had destroyed his faith in Communism, but it restored the religious faith he had abandoned years before. In gratitude for that faith and the friendships he made, he bids a warm farewell to his home of eight years: “Bless you, prison, for having been in my life!”

Having completed the *Gulag*, Solzhenitsyn turned to other projects, including the work he envisioned as a young man of 18; only now his approach

would be very different. *The Red Wheel* tells the story of the people and events responsible for the Russian revolution. He was in his seventies when he finally completed it (though not all of it has been translated into English). At 6,000 pages, it is a weighty but, from the chapters in this collection, an eminently rewarding undertaking. Solzhenitsyn has described it as "the chief artistic design of my life."

Of the selections that appear for the first time in English, the ones that will probably attract the most attention are those from *Two Hundred Years Together*, a history of relations between Russians and Jews. He says he avoided the subject for a long time in the hope that someone else might do it. When no one did, he took on the task himself, even though he says writing about it was "like walking a razor's edge." Yet Solzhenitsyn seems to keep his balance. On the role of Jews among the Bolsheviks, he writes how many Russians view these Jews: "Those who wish to prove that the Revolution was un-Russian and of alien stock point to Jewish names and pseudonyms in an effort to clear Rus-

sians of blame." Discussing how Jewish authors treat this subject, he says they "are unanimously of the opinion that these were not Jews in spirit. They were renegades." Solzhenitsyn agrees. But he then goes on to ask whether a people—Jewish or Russian—should remember its renegades. He answers yes: Every "people must answer morally for all of its past—including that past which is shameful." Jews and Russians, he says, must take responsibility for their renegades: "For if we release ourselves from any responsibility for the actions of our national kin, the very concept of a people loses any real meaning." After reading the excerpts from *Two Hundred Years Together*, one comes away with the impression its most controversial aspect is that it has yet to find an English language publisher.

Also in the collection are many of Solzhenitsyn's essays and speeches, including his speech accepting the Nobel Prize for Literature and the commencement address he gave at Harvard University. All are worthwhile because they show the man behind the artist. In February 1974, almost twenty years after his release from the Gulag, the Soviets again arrested him and, because he was too well known to kill, the next day expelled him from the country. On the day of his arrest, Solzhenitsyn somehow smuggled a message to his countrymen: "Live Not by Lies!" He implored them to attack the Soviet system at its most vulnerable point: it lies. It may not be, he said, "an easy choice for the body"—it may cost a person his comfortable apartment or even his job—but it is "the only one for the soul."

In the West, Solzhenitsyn remained Solzhenitsyn. He began his commencement address at Harvard in 1978 by citing the university's motto, Veritas. Truth seldom is sweet, he said, and then he proceeded to offer, "as a friend, not as an adversary," some bitter truths, many of which remain as true today as when he uttered them almost thirty years ago. The most striking feature that an outside observer notices in the West, he said, was a "decline in courage," par-

ticularly among the ruling and intellectual elites. But this decline was also marked by "occasional outbursts of boldness and inflexibility ... when dealing with weak governments and with countries that lack support ..." He also criticized the West for believing that all other countries "are but temporarily prevented (by wicked leaders or by their own barbarity and incomprehension) from pursuing Western pluralistic democracy and adopting the Western way of life." The Harvard speech cooled America's admiration for Solzhenitsyn. The *New York Times* dismissed him as "dangerous" and a "zealot." The *Washington Post* sniffed that his views were "very Russian." George W. Bush is not on record as having any comment on the speech, but no doubt he would have accused Solzhenitsyn of hating America for its freedom.

During his 20 years in the West, 18 of which were spent in Cavendish, Vermont, Solzhenitsyn never ceased offering his truths, about Communism as well as about the spiritual dimensions of man's life. Technological progress, he acknowledged, had brought man many benefits, many possessions, but he said the endless accumulation of possessions would not bring man fulfillment. Discerning individuals realized that possessions must be subordinated to higher principles. The meaning of earthly existence, he writes in *The Gulag Archipelago*, "lies not, as we have grown used to thinking, in prospering, but ... in the development of the soul."

In February 1994, following the collapse of the Soviet Union—a collapse, by the way, he had been predicting for years—Solzhenitsyn bid farewell to the people of Cavendish: "Exile is always difficult, and yet I could not imagine a better place to live and wait for my return home than Cavendish, Vermont."

In May 1994, he arrived back in Russia to a hero's welcome that he undoubtedly didn't believe he deserved. Readers of this book will know better. ■

Kevin Lynch, a former articles editor of National Review, lives in Arlington, Va.

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[*Caesar: Life of a Colossus*,
Adrian Goldsworthy, Yale
University Press, 608 pages]

When One Man Ruled the World

By Daniel Larison

ONE OF THE FOREMOST citizens and senators in the closing days of the Roman Republic, Julius Caesar was a study in the contradictory impulses of ambition and duty that ruled and eventually doomed the Republic to its transformation into imperial monarchy. Adrian Goldsworthy's commendable and thorough biography accommodates Caesar's complexity and his fitful path from his early career as shrewd political deal-maker to his better-known accomplishments as legendary military commander and victorious dictator. Goldsworthy tells Caesar's story with professional detachment, extensive understanding of the institutional and political mechanisms of the late Republic, and proficiency with the Latin and Greek sources. Though his chief reputation is as a military historian, and he clearly and succinctly relates the many significant battles in Caesar's campaigns in Gaul, Britain, Illyricum, Macedonia, Egypt, Africa, and Spain, Goldsworthy weaves together a rich and engaging narrative that gives full weight to the importance of political, personal, and family obligations that defined the course of Caesar's life.

Goldsworthy's biography, appropriately enough for the conqueror of Gaul, is divided into three parts: Caesar's life and career through his first dictatorship; his time as proconsul in Gaul; and the civil war, dictatorship, and death of Caesar. Where many accounts give even more attention to Caesar's political and military career in Gaul and afterwards, Goldsworthy seeks to provide something more in the way of a full biography

that tries to account, insofar as the sources allow, for Caesar's personal and family relationships. Readers may find that the digressions into Roman sexual mores and the relatively frequent attention to Caesar's numerous affairs take up more space than the subjects are worth, but to the degree that his rakishness and charm were vital elements of Caesar's personality, they are important parts of the story. For instance, when such digressions illuminate the personal antagonism between Caesar and Cato the Younger—with whose half-sister Servilia Caesar had a long-running relationship—they remind us that the politics of the Republic were driven by personalities and personal associations rather than by what we might call ideological or "party" motives, which were hardly present. There were no permanent alliances, much less parties, only shifting allegiances between families for the advancement of their most prominent members.

Goldsworthy begins by situating the reader in the Roman world of the early first century B.C. with a brief overview of the history and institutions of the Republic. He brings the reader up to the time of Marius and Sulla, whose bloody quarrel in the 80s B.C. set the stage and created some of the precedents for the civil wars that followed in the next generation. Sulla's victory and dictatorship corresponded with the earliest days of Caesar's career, when the young senator found himself tied by family connections to the losing side. The terror of the proscriptions and legalized murders of Sulla and others' personal and political enemies presumably made a powerful impression on Caesar, who later wielded the power of dictatorship in a markedly less bloody way.

From there Goldsworthy's Caesar takes over center stage, where he remains for the rest of the book, as we follow him from his early unsuccessful career as a prosecutor and his martial exploits in Asia, to his climb up the ladder of the *cursus honorum* until his election as consul and the creation of the informal alliance of the three great

men of the time—Caesar, Crassus, and Pompey, known to us as the First Triumvirate.

The nature of the sources, of which Caesar's *Commentaries* form a large part, and the significance of Caesar's achievements in conquering Gaul for his meteoric rise to one of the two leading positions in the Republic, both dictate that the largest part of the book focus on the Gallic Wars. Here Goldsworthy is in his element as he masterfully details the campaigns of the 50s B.C. and uses the successes and setbacks of Caesar's proconsular period as a mirror of his resourcefulness and leadership abilities. Caesar's combination of political prowess in handling Rome's Gaulish allies, his occasional use of exemplary violence against Gaulish chieftains who have turned against him, and his ability to weld a cohesive and loyal fighting force out of the legions under his command helped make it possible for him to overcome what could easily have been humiliating defeats or massive reverses at the hands of the northern tribes.

Shaken by the upheavals of the years of the rivals Marius and Sulla, and scarred by the retributions of Sulla's dictatorship, Roman institutions had started to prove themselves incapable of mediating the volatile competition between leading aristocrats that had long typified the nature of the contestation of political power and social prestige. Caesar delivered the final blows to this tottering structure in the early 40s B.C., but as with his own assassination, the slaying of the Roman Republic was the work of many hands. If Caesar precipitated the final disintegration of the old order when he entered into Italy with his army as a rebel in violation of law and custom, Goldsworthy also makes clear that Pompey and the Senate had forced him into a corner and that it was Pompey's confidence in the strength of his own position—which he frequently overestimated because of the extraordinary nature of his past successes—that prevented any chance of accommodating the rivals.

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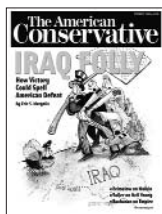
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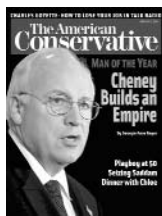
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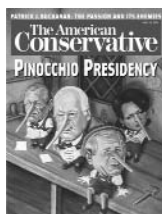


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Without neglecting Caesar's capacity for calculated, ruthless violence, one of the themes that Goldsworthy continually advances is Caesar's cultivation of a reputation for clemency. This often proved useful in winning over former adversaries, but it failed him rather crucially in the case of the former Pompeian and nephew of Cato, Marcus Junius Brutus, who was also ironically the son of Caesar's own lover, Servilia. Like Cato's own stubborn refusal to endure the humiliation of submission to Caesar, famously going so far as suicide to maintain his reputation as the stern defender of Roman virtue, it seems to have been the case that Brutus's republican zeal was probably rather baffling to Caesar the pragmatic political survivor. The course of action Brutus took was certainly not something he remotely expected, and with good reason. By most measures, Caesar's rule as dictator proved to be mild in practice, while the far bloodier dictator Sulla went back into private life untouched, so he might have been forgiven for thinking that he did not need any bodyguards. However, as moderate as his rule was, what it symbolized—the end of the contest of aristocratic equals and the permanent preeminence of one man—was more significant than any outrage he could have committed and more threatening than any particular act of usurpation.

As the title suggests, Caesar looms large in historical memory. He has represented many things in the interpretations of later generations: reformer, opportunist, revolutionary, patriot, tyrant, master general. To varying degrees, he was all of these things, but perhaps it is because of his legacy as the forerunner and example of all Western claimants to empire that his name transformed into the formal titles of emperors in Germany, Austria, and Russia, and his person synonymous with absolute rule and empire. (Even Armenians, on the eastern reaches of the old Roman world, use *kaisrut'yun*, literally Caesar-ness, as the word for "empire.")

But it may be because of his embodiment of anti-republican tyranny in the

Anglo-American Whig imagination that he first received his originally low reputation here in America. It is regrettable that this latter reception of the memory of Caesar does not receive any mention in Goldsworthy's concluding remarks, which focus instead on the portrayal of Caesar in modern popular culture. The legend on the seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia (*Sic Semper Tyrannis*) still captures the admiration for tyrannicides that prevailed in the founding generation. Anti-Federalists claimed the mantle of true republican opponents of Federalist tyranny with their tracts written under the allonyms of Caesar's chief political adversaries or of his assassins, namely Cato and Brutus. In this they competed with the Federalist who wrote under the name of another assassin of Caesar, Cassius.

Washington's decision to lay down his *imperium*, so to speak, and follow the path of Cincinnatus rather than Caesar was decisive for the future development of the United States. For the founding generation, Caesar represented all the dangers of concentrated power in the hands of one man, and the rise of Caesar appeared to the classically educated and classicizing aristocracy to coincide with and to cause the extinction of liberty. While it may not be the lesson Goldsworthy would have us draw, and while it is appropriate that a scholar eschew political moralizing as much as possible, there is much for us to learn from the cautionary tale of a Republic brought low by faction, personal ambition, and war that Caesar's life presents.

It is a tribute to Goldsworthy's abilities that he has carefully and fairly reconstructed the life of one of the great figures of Western history. Goldsworthy's biography will not be the last word written about Caesar, but the beginning reader, the professional scholar, and the amateur student of history will all find in it a clear and captivating picture of the man who forever changed Rome. ■

Daniel Larison is a Ph.D. student in Byzantine history at the University of Chicago.

[*The Essential Russell Kirk: Selected Essays*, edited by George A. Panichas, ISI Books, 578 pages]

Ghost Over the Conservative Graveyard

By W. Wesley McDonald

RUSSELL KIRK (1918-94) burst upon the American intellectual scene in 1953 with the publication of his third book, *The Conservative Mind*. His discovery of an Anglo-American tradition of conservative ideas beginning with the 18th-century British thinker, Edmund Burke, catapulted the 35-year-old Michigan college professor of history from obscurity into national prominence. Recognized as a leading intellectual figure, his books were reviewed favorably in *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines and the *New York Times*. *Newsweek* hailed him as “one of the foremost intellectual spokesmen for the conservative position.”

By the 1980s, though, all had changed. Kirk suffered neglect not only from the intellectual and media establishment, but even from many within the very movement he helped found. Following his death, two intellectual biographies have been written about him. A third book by Gerald Russello will be published next spring. George A. Panichas' superbly edited compilation of Kirk's essays provides further evidence that a welcomed and long overdue revival of interest in Kirk's thought is now underway.

Author of over 30 books and hundreds of essays, a nationally syndicated newspaper columnist, and a regular contributor to *National Review*, Kirk wore many hats in his long and varied career. He was a leading spokesman for the conservative movement, adviser to presidents, a scholar, educational reformer, a writer of ghostly tales, and,

lastly and most proudly for him, a “man of letters.”

The product of five years of meticulous editing, *The Essential Kirk* lives up to its title. Even though Kirk's essays have been anthologized before (mostly by Kirk himself), this collection is the first to cover the entire spectrum of his life's work. Panichas, a prolific literary scholar and critic, present editor of *Modern Age*, and a long-time friend of Kirk, has gleaned 43 representative writings from Kirk's canon, including essays, reviews, review-essays, prefatory pieces, public addresses, and entire chapters from books. Without Panichas' efforts, many of these pieces would have languished unread in hard-to-find journals and out-of-print books.

Panichas groups his selections thematically into nine sections to “identify the particular locales of the battles in which [Kirk] was engaged” and “encompass the strategies and tactics of the general warfare which demanded from him the utmost effort, tenacity, courage, belief.” He introduces each section with a brief interpretive essay, and each interpretive essay is preceded by a descriptive head note. The bibliography includes works by Kirk and about him. Panichas has also compiled a useful nar-

and “distinct character and discipline” exemplified in Kirk's thinking. His works “unfailingly return to a moral center ... there is always a state of judgment, a central creed and identity, to which he comes back again and again for support and ratification.”

More than most who have written about Kirk, Panichas understands the importance of the concept of the moral imagination to Kirk's moral teaching. Kirk described the moral imagination, a term coined by Edmund Burke, as “that power of ethical perception which strides beyond the barriers of private experience and events of the moment”; especially as found in “the higher form of this power exercised in poetry and art.” A uniquely human faculty, not shared with the lower forms of life, the moral imagination comprises “man's power to perceive ethical truth, abiding law, in the seeming chaos of many events.” Without “the moral imagination, man would live merely from day to day, or rather moment to moment, as dogs do. It is the strange faculty—inexplicable if men are assumed to have an animal nature only—of discerning greatness, justice, and order, beyond the bars of appetite and self-interest.” In any civilized society, the moral imagination

HIS WORKS “**UNFAILINGLY RETURN TO A MORAL CENTER ... THERE IS ALWAYS A STATE OF JUDGMENT, A CENTRAL CREED AND IDENTITY, TO WHICH HE COMES BACK AGAIN AND AGAIN FOR SUPPORT AND RATIFICATION.**”

rative chronology of Kirk's life excerpted from Kirk's memoirs, *The Sword of Imagination*.

“The selections featured in this work,” observes Panichas in his long, informative preface, “are indicative of Kirk's gifts as an essayist, critic, and lecturer.” Whether they are about history, literature, morals, politics, economics, or religion, none of these essays can be considered as mere “fugitive” pieces of writing. The “interaction and interdependence between” these essays demonstrate the “unity and harmony”

reigns supreme. When it functions in an impaired manner or ceases to function altogether, not only does communication between generations become difficult, but distorted views of human nature arise and moral character erodes, resulting in societal moral decadence. The afflictions of our society, Kirk stressed, are chiefly caused by our degraded imaginations.

Kirk expanded the meaning of Burke's concept of the moral imagination by applying it in an innovative fashion to counter the pseudo-scientific formula-

tions of contemporary ideologies like neo-Benthamite libertarianism, behaviorism, and social engineering. This may be his most enduring contribution to modern political thought. He further recognized moral imagination's critical importance to the revival of conservatism in an age when the very sources of imaginative inspiration are withering. If conservatism is to become a lasting intellectual, moral, and political force against the discordant impulses of our age, Kirk argued, it must be rooted in a faith in the power of imagination to control man's lower impulses.

This faculty of ethical perception, as Kirk informs us in these essays, has among its many sources history, humane letters, fable, myth, and religion. The creations of historians, theologians, or poets of great genius, for example, fashion out of the myriad fragments of human experience intuitive wholes or moral universals. These ethical universals embody the truths of human nature from which we derive the self-knowledge that teaches us about our potentialities and limitations. The imagination further enables us to escape from the confining limits of our personal sensual experience to become conscious of

power of the moral imagination, not the faculty of reason, which gives rise to the ultimate norms by which the soul and commonwealth are ordered.

Kirk's trust in the controlling power of the moral imagination is closely connected in his thought with his distrust of human nature. "Men's appetites are voracious and sanguinary," Kirk affirmed, and must be "restrained by this collective and immemorial wisdom we call prejudice, tradition, customary morality." In his account of human nature, he described man as having an immutably flawed character that gives rise to a proclivity for selfish, arbitrary, and socially destructive behavior, the chief obstacle of utopian reformers who imagine that man can be perfected by schemes of societal or economic transformation.

One of Kirk's self-appointed tasks was to demonstrate that unlike fascism, communism, liberalism, and libertarianism, conservatism is not an ideology, but the rejection of ideology. Kirk insisted that the mind of the ideologue and that of the conservative man of moral imagination are always at opposite poles. For the distorted visions of reality that emerge from the imaginations of ideo-

logues create social and moral disorder. Ideologues formulate static doctrines severed from historical experience and moral authority. They deduce in a casuistic fashion vast schemes for social and political improvement. They reduce the complex nature of man to abstract formulae intended to help bring forth an earthly Paradise. Lacking a conception of the inner life, ideologues perceive man as a being whose behavior is wholly determined by the phenomenal forces of nature. They imagine that once these forces are fully understood, they will have within their grasp the means ultimately to control man's destiny. These "armed doctrines" threaten religion, tradition, convention, custom, prescription, and constitutional government. They are the enemies of the humane social order, which Kirk, throughout his career, strove mightily to preserve. These central arguments of Kirk's thought are well captured in Panichas' anthology.

Panichas incorrectly believes, however, that postmodernism is just another insidious form of ideology. "There is no doubt in [Kirk's] mind," he writes, "that those who are known as post-modern intellectuals were held fast in 'the clutch of ideology.'" But there are both left- and right-wing postmodernists, as Peter Augustine Lawler and Paul Gottfried have pointed out. Kirk was himself a postmodernist, as Gerald Russello demonstrates in his important forthcoming book *The Postmodern Imagination of Russell Kirk*. Contrary to Panichas' argument, then, it is possible to be a postmodernist who acknowledges the existence of an ethical ultimate.

This volume will long be recognized as an important and substantial contribution to Kirk scholarship. Panichas' careful editing and explanatory notes will ensure that this work will be a standard resource for future generations wanting to acquaint themselves with the thought of one of the most important conservative minds of the 20th century. I only have two complaints with his considerable achievement. First, his convoluted prose style and penchant for "Latinisms" made reading his prefatory essay sometimes hard slogging. Second, since the book is about as thick as the New York City telephone directory, it is a little unwieldy. The Intercollegiate Studies Institute would have done better to have published it as a two-volume set. ■

W. Wesley McDonald teaches political theory and was chairman of the Political Science Department at Elizabethtown College. He is the author of Russell Kirk and the Age of Ideology.

ONE OF KIRK'S SELF-APPOINTED TASKS WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT UNLIKE FASCISM, COMMUNISM, LIBERALISM, AND LIBERTARIANISM, CONSERVATISM IS NOT AN IDEOLOGY, BUT THE REJECTION OF IDEOLOGY.

what is beyond ourselves. By perceiving what we hold in common with others, or imaginatively seeing things from the perspective of others unlike ourselves, we become aware of ourselves as members of a community.

This awareness of the ultimate good common to all mankind is the basis of the final end of politics—namely, genuine community. Kirk believed that personal experience and individual rationality, whether separately or in combination, cannot account for the most important things in life. It is the non-conceptual and non-definitional

logues create social and moral disorder. Ideologues formulate static doctrines severed from historical experience and moral authority. They deduce in a casuistic fashion vast schemes for social and political improvement. They reduce the complex nature of man to abstract formulae intended to help bring forth an earthly Paradise. Lacking a conception of the inner life, ideologues perceive man as a being whose behavior is wholly determined by the phenomenal forces of nature. They imagine that once these forces are fully understood, they will have within their grasp the means ulti-

Think Tank Warriors



Let's start the new year with a hard truth: throwing in 20,000 to 30,000 more troops to save Iraq from chaos will have exactly the same result

that Hitler's last ditch Belgian gamble during Christmas 1944 had on the western front. Total failure. One more surge is the last refuge of the loser. Generals are conditioned to pretend victory is just around the corner, otherwise soldiers will not fight. Not even Marines. The Japanese and Germans did during the Second World War as they had nothing to go back to. We do. America could return to her own shores, chastened yet still herself—but we plow deeper, as if our survival depends on winning this futile war.

The conflict in Iraq is beyond analogy. It is beyond hopelessness. It is as heart-breaking as it is callous on the part of those sitting behind comfortable desks while they send youngsters out to do their bidding.

We have no military intelligence in Iraq, as the real enemy is one and the same as the government we are trying to prop up. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is as capable of reining in Moqtada al-Sadr as John Podhoretz is of turning down another apple pie à la mode. The city of Baghdad is ruled by armed gangsters who practice mass killings at will. The Iraqi police and Iraqi army are inseparable from the militias. One million Iraqis—40 percent of the professional classes—have left the country since the 2003 invasion. Washington calls this progress. Only the green zone is safe—as safe as a medieval duke hunkering down in his fortress high up on a Tuscan hill, surrounded by his enemies and waiting for the inevitable.

The idea that such a hellhole can be saved by introducing thousands more troops suggests that Bush is suffering

from the aftereffects of a lobotomy. More troops will spend their time defending Sunni enclaves from ethnic cleansing Shi'ites. Nothing more. The best that can be hoped for is to establish a green line between Sunnis and Shi'ites in western Baghdad, while losing a minimum of men. The irony that American soldiers have died and will die to keep the two sects apart will not be lost to anyone, except for diehard neocon zealots.

This is a Bush whim, aided and abetted by ideologues who have now decided that Iran should be next. The three most dangerous words of the English language? The Kagan brothers. Robert and Frederick—fat, four-eyed, and very warlike—a matched pair of sofa Samurai agitating for more troops, more blood, more carnage. One is an adviser to John McCain, the other is at the American Enterprise Institute. Both

hold Baghdad—and he wants them to stay. Defeat, he says, will break the American Army and Marines more surely and more disastrously than extended combat tours and many more casualties. I do not know whether these two tough guys are married or whether they have children, but I will bet my last devalued dollar that no one related to the Kagan family has ever seen action or is about to.

This will not end well, but don't expect these architects of the greatest foreign policy disaster in American history to take blame. This column predicted as long ago as 2003 that the neocons would find a way to save their reputations, their TV appearances, and their think tank positions. Now they are squirming, but their careers are safe.

"Who screwed up?" is their mantra, surely as they circle round their own. Rumsfeld should be held responsible, but he will not be. Wolfowitz and Feith should be called to account, but neither will. Ahmad Chalabi should be in jail, but he is not. All continue to prosper.

THE IDEA THAT SUCH A **HELLHOLE CAN BE SAVED** BY INTRODUCING MORE TROOPS SUGGESTS THAT BUSH IS SUFFERING FROM THE **AFTEREFFECTS OF A LOBOTOMY**.

are authors. Robert Kagan wants a strike against Iran's nuclear capabilities and a change of regime in that ancient country. His martial talk, he insists, is for the glory of America. "Innocent people can't do any good in the world," says Bobby boy. Americans have been trying to expand their influence across the globe from the moment the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, he told London's *Spectator*.

Freddy is just as martial-minded. He wants 45,000 new troops to clear and

After Israel, in cahoots or in a joint operation with Uncle Sam, nukes Iran this year, the fallout—pun intended—will be terrible. There might even be a nuclear retaliation by Iran if it has managed to secure a bomb or two from the Russians or Pakistanis. Then the stuff will really hit the fan, and the first ones to scream that we haven't gone far enough will be, yes, you guessed right, those lovely fellows who got us in the Iraqi mess to begin with. Have a happy new year. ■



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